



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

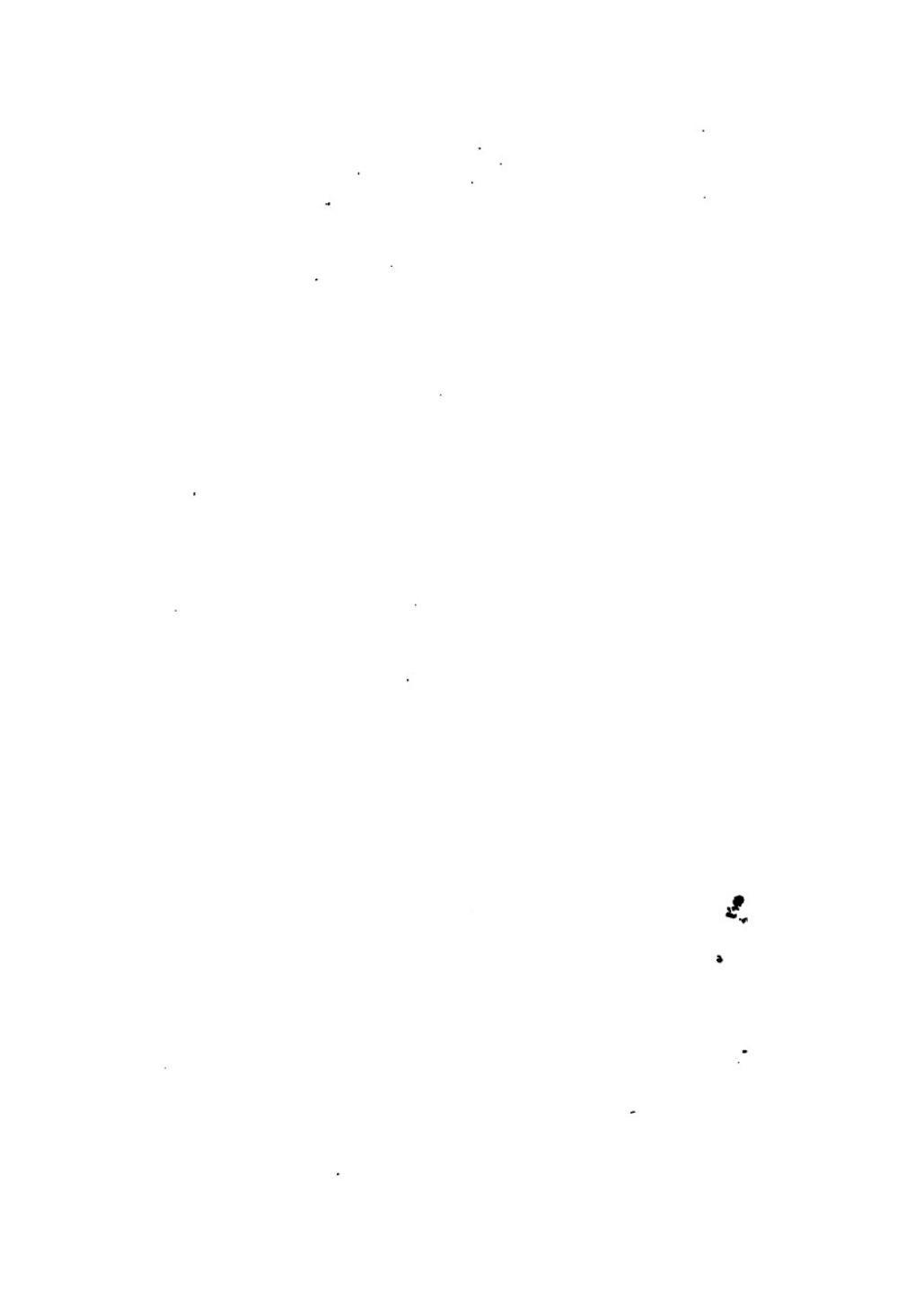
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



20







CITOYENNE JACQUELINE

Vi - with Others dear Core. 189

CITOYENNE JACQUELINE

A Woman's Lot in the Great French Revolution

By SARAH TYTLER

AUTHOR OF "LADY BELL," "NOBLESSE OBLIGE," "BEAUTY AND THE BEAST," "ST. MUNGO'S CITY," ETC.



A NEW EDITION

London

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1888.



Robert

WITH LOVE THAT CANNOT DIE

HERE AND YONDER

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
THE TOUR DE FAYE—A CARD PARTY AND A RESTLESS CITOYENNE	I
CHAPTER II.	
LA SARTE'S FETE—MOTHER AND SON	17
CHAPTER III.	
A FRENCH LOTHARIO — THE CURÉ'S WARNING — A SPIED LETTER	49
CHAPTER IV.	
THE LAST OF THE EMIGRANTS—PETRONILLE DE CROI— BABETTE'S USELESS PILGRIMAGE	81
CHAPTER V.	
THE CHANGE OF BRIDES—JACQUELINE AT BAY—TAKES SANCTUARY	119

	PAGE
CHAPTER VI.	
WHAT THE CHEVALIER, MONSIEUR, MADAME, AND BABETTE SAY OF JACQUELINE'S DEGRADATION—HOW THE WIFE OF MAÎTRE MICHEL FARES, SEPTEMBER, 1792 . . .	160
CHAPTER VII.	
THE GRIPE OF THE WINTER—LOUIS CAPET DEAD FOR THE SINS OF HIS FATHERS—THE SANS-CULOTTES AT FAYE . . .	185
CHAPTER VIII.	
THE VICISSITUDES OF A NIGHT	196
CHAPTER IX.	
JACQUELINE'S JOURNEY TO PARIS	215
CHAPTER X.	
PARIS IN 1793—A SPARTAN DEPUTY AND HIS FRIENDS— MAÎTRE MICHEL COMES UP WITH JACQUELINE	227
CHAPTER XI.	
LIFE WITH THE DURANDS—AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE—THE LAST OF THE BUREAUX D'ESPRTS— AGAIN AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE	257
CHAPTER XII.	
BLOOD THICKER THAN WATER—THE MORALITY OF THE PLANKS—SAVE WHO CAN	286
CHAPTER XIII.	
DIANE LIGNY—MICHEL AND BABETTE	299

CONTENTS.

ix

PAGE

CHAPTER XIV.

JONQUILLE'S SUN SETS FIRST IN THE RUE ST. HONORE, THEN IN THE HALL OF THE CONVENTION—THE FIRST DAYS OF JUNE—MONSIEUR BROUGHT TO AN EXAMINA- TION AND COMMITTED TO THE LUXEMBOURG	317
---	-----

CHAPTER XV.

THE TWO WOMEN OF JULY—THE DAUGHTER OF MONSIEUR WHO HAD ERRED; THE DISCIPLE OF SOCRATES WHO COULD NOT ERR	335
--	-----

CHAPTER XVI.

SUMMER LIFE IN THE PRISONS—GHOSTS IN THE LUXEM- BOURG	347
--	-----

CHAPTER XVII.

ROUGH ROADS—THE NEW STYLE AND ITS FEAST—THE LAST OF THE GIRONDISTES—THE HARVEST OF DEATH IN THE PROVINCES	363
---	-----

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE QUEENS CROWNED AND UNCROWNED—THE WOMAN WHO WAS NOT A QUEEN, WHO WAS ONLY “LYD THE SLUT”—A WRETCHED FATHER'S DARLING	376
---	-----

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GUILLOTINE GOES ALWAYS—FRESH ARRIVALS AT THE LUXEMBOURG	385
--	-----

CHAPTER XX.

COMMON CLAY PIPKINS—DEATH AN EVERLASTING SLEEP .	410
--	-----

	PAGE
CHAPTER XXI.	
DEATH THE VISITOR AND DEATH THE EXECUTIONER	429
CHAPTER XXII.	
JACQUELINE'S TRIAL	460
CHAPTER XXIII.	
A LONG REST FOR JACQUELINE WHILE THE STORM BLOWS ON IN FRANCE	468
CHAPTER XXIV.	
THE TAIL OF THE TERROR IN THE PROVINCES—BABETTE'S FAITH — FÉLICITÉ POMMERAN AND HER OFFICER— FÉLICITÉ AN OLD WOMAN—BON SOIR	479

CITOYENNE JACQUELINE.

CHAPTER L

THE TOUR DE FAYE—A CARD PARTY AND A RESTLESS
CITOYENNE.



HE early summer of 1792 was ripening the wheat-ears and darkening the vine leaves about the hamlet of Faye-aux-Jonquilles. The season was too far advanced, however, for showing the appropriateness of its sweet-smelling name, or for proving that it had contributed in its day to the four thousand crowns' worth of jonquilles spent on the progress of the Great Monarch to Chantilly, which is pleasantly chronicled by that jonquille among French women—Madame de Sevigné.

Faye was in the interior of France, sixty miles from Paris. It was nothing to speak of in size. A score of thatched cottages, some of them of dry mud, but none of them more than moderately miserable; an old inn; and a little church, not yet closed, with square tower

and red roof. The three constituents of a hamlet were fairly represented in it—the green-stained fountain in the centre, where men and women lounged and gossipped, and washed their onions and radishes, and shred their cabbages in the evenings ; the posting-house —to wit, the bulged-out old inn ; the prison, traditionally held to be the dungeons of the little castle on the rising ground at the end of the village. A rough road, bordered by walnut trees, wound and clomb to the Tour de Faye, giving one the impression that the village rose on tip-toe to curtsey to the feudal lord and master, in spite of the prohibition of titles of rank by a National Assembly, and the flight of great flocks of nobles.

The Tour was a true antique, not setting its claim on massiveness or splendour. It had the hoary picturesque grace of a grey lichen, set between the green of the earth and the blue, or daffodil, or pea-bloom of the sky. The walls were very thick, and pierced with narrow windows. They looked as if they might have stood sieges from the Normans and the English, the League and the Fronde ; and as if they might yet stand another siege from a new Jacquerie. There were two tourelles, connected by the nucleus of a main tower, crowned by an unequal, high-peaked roof, with a handful of girouettes, or weathercocks, thrown into the bargain. A morsel of bocage—what remained of the chase and the fields of the Faye domain—stretched out in the background. On one side a terrace, with a flight of shallow steps, led down into the garden, the *stateliness and precision* of whose clipped cypresses and

yews contrasted broadly with the wild luxuriance of its thickets of lovely red and white roses. The two tourelles were, so far as regarded their internal economy, perfectly self-contained, and had been named, centuries before the Revolution, the tourelle of Monsieur, and the tourelle of Madame. Monsieur's tourelle held the charter room, Monsieur's cabinet, and Monsieur's bedroom. Madame's tourelle held a morning room, Madame's boudoir, and Mademoiselle's bedroom. The salle and the guest-chambers were in the connecting link of the main tower, over the arched doorway. There was a sunk flat, with a vaulted kitchen and red-rusted cellars, reputed to have been dungeons. The servants' closets were niched in anywhere and everywhere, and were not counted in the plan. No doubt, the arrangements were all according to native ideas of order and propriety, though certainly they "knew not the comfortable."

Citizen Faye had not swum with the great tide of aristocratic emigration. He had family reasons. He was a philosopher himself, to begin with,—that was when he did not exactly expect the sans-culottes to proceed from theory to practice. He was living on sufferance, shorn of his plumes, and pinched in his diet, with the prospect of becoming still more a beggar, and of dining at the table without the tablecloth, should he ever venture to Paris.

The simple inhabitants of Faye had not yet imagined anything so fashionable and distinguished as a scaffold in its own person rising up, and becoming the leading spectacle, in their tame provincial experience. They

were far back, these peasant proprietors. They were not even big enough for a National Guard of their own. They had to go to the next town to see the Altar of Liberty, and to swear to the Social Contract. Their single glory was, that Jonquille, the son of the innkeeper La Sarte, was the deputy for their department of Mousse. But in the face of this fact, so great was the force of habit, that when Monsieur de Faye, in his redingote and ruffles, strolled down in the midst of the children, of the goats and the hens, and stood still to speak to this or that goodman, then Citizen Joiner or Citizen Blacksmith would pluck the cap from his head, even to the tune of the far-away, yet swelling cry, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!" shouted by the orators up in Paris.

Monsieur (still Monsieur within the Tour walls) went every evening between five and six to kiss Madame's hand, ask her how she did, and play cards with her and his daughter—their only child—till supper was served at eight. The family were thus playing cards one evening in June, 1792.

Madame's room was warm, and heavily perfumed. There was a glowing wood fire on the hearth-dogs, and the open window in the embrasure only tempered the heat. Before the window, on a stand, were pots with late violets and lilies of the valley, and, in small tubs, two forced orange trees in full blossom. Above the orange trees were cages of canaries, both full fledged and newly hatched, which kept up a continual warbling and twittering. There were strips of Persian carpet on the clear polished floor; mirrors in filagree frames; a

harpsichord ; family portraits of women with powdered hair, and men in lace cravats and half armour. There were soft, deep easy chairs, and a low, broad sofa, besides chairs of gilt ebony, with cushions in tambour work. There was provision for Madame's devotion in a draped recess, furnished with an ivory crucifix, and thin books of hours, bearing forbidden shields on their covers ; and for her handiwork, in a mouton or heap of gold lace, the threads of which she unpicked with all the grace, skill, and dignified industry of a parfileuse, or unpicker of gold thread, which had been the only employment for grand dames in Madame's youth, and which they put to profit by selling its bullion fruit in the regular market. There was a rich, though tarnished, trailing ruby velvet curtain veiling the door. But the great feature in the room was an immense four-post bed, seven feet every way, with gauze and silk curtains, and a white satin quilt, embroidered with huge stately convolvulus and carnations. Madame was still partial to receptions in that bed, on which occasions she wore a white jacket and white gloves, and had the card table so placed that she could join in the game without difficulty or awkwardness.

Altogether, if ever there was a noble, sensuous, quaint setting to a party of card-players, it was the boudoir of Madame. And it may please those who love to be tickled with the keen flavour of danger in the wind, to reflect, as they look on all such family groups lingering in France in the year of grace 1792, that the sword of Damocles hung over them, suspended by the single hair.

Not only over Monsieur and his superannuated major-domo, who were the men of the party, but over Madame, over Mademoiselle—ay, over the very old waiting woman, Agathe, and the young waiting woman, Babette, if they dared to shelter master or mistress.

Monsieur was stout and grizzled—those foes to romantic illusion,—yet nobody could have mistaken him, nobody could have forgotten him. There was a grand air, not only in his Bourbon long nose and double chin, in the carriage of his head and the wave of his hand, but in the very curl of his lip and the droop of the heavy eyelids over his hollow eyes. He was never in dishabille either of mind or body; he must have put on and off his damask suit as Louis did his wig—curled and powdered to the last puff—in bed and with the curtains drawn. He never fretted or fumed at Madame; to her he was always courtly, bland, and agreeable. Possibly he had his errors and deficiencies, like the amiable and delightful Frenchman of whom most people have heard, who would have been perfect except for the flaw of occasionally poisoning a friend. But the sentence was true, applied to Monsieur, that “men never grew old till the Revolution. Before then they had no wearisome infirmities. When they had gout, they walked as though they had it not, and without making faces; they hid suffering by a good education.”

Madame had possessed birth and beauty, and, what is more valued than either in France, wit, when all these had more than their full prestige. Both in body and mind she was now made up too elaborately, yet not

unsuccessfully. The brilliant rouge, and the perruque with the hair piled high above the forehead, and the plume of feathers above the hair, agreed with the silver and blue brocade and the hoop—the fashion of Madame's prosperity, and the fashion of her adversity. She sat with her fan on one arm, and a diamond snuff-box within easy reach of her disengaged hand. She was full of airs, but they were delightfully subtle, and dashed with natural humour; and she was frank and candid in the midst of her affectation. She told stories of the Porcheron balls, where she had gone for a frolic, and danced with her lacquey; and of Madame Dudevant's bureau, when Madame's biting wit was only second to that of Voltaire. If Monsieur was not present, she would describe how she had met him first the evening before their nuptials, and how she, a girl of fifteen fresh from her convent, had been frightened by his plume, his sword-knot (Monsieur was a mousquetaire), and his curious glances; not understanding then that there was nothing to fear. Monsieur and she, born and brought up as they had been, could not do other than behave becomingly to each other, Madame would say, with a loftiness that was at the same time inexpressibly easy.

Those figures were of old France. Mademoiselle, on her stool opposite them, was of young France. The French have it that a woman cannot be two things at once, and so not a prude at twenty. But Jacqueline de Faye was a great many things at sixteen; she was a philosopher, a fine lady, half a nun, and a whole passionate, sentimental girl. However, her education had

been exceptional, and charged with transition, like the times. She had been reared at home instead of in the traditional convent ; she had been played with by her father in fanciful philanthropic and metaphysical discussions ; she had been talked to by her mother ; she had been confirmed by the curé ; she had read on her own account "Paul and Virginia" and "Melanie," and longed to live according to nature in the Mauritius ; to have tamarinds and pines for cherries and walnuts, the Fan Palm River for the Faye stream, and the Shaddock Grove Church for the village church near the willows. She could have even found it in her heart to wish that her little lion dog were transformed into Fidèle, and Agathe and Paul into such faithful negroes as Dominique and Mary. And oh ! above all, should she ever find a slim, dark, dutiful, devoted Paul ? Was there anybody in the world like Paul ? Was there a chevalier, and was his name Achille ? If she could only go to the Mauritius and try life according to nature there ! But she was an honest little girl, and she was afraid that even though Monsieur, and Madame, and Babette, and above all Achille, accompanied her, she would miss the Paris *Mercury*, and the fresh news and ribands.

The Revolution was making strange work with women, when Manon Philippon, among the etching tools and copper-plates of the engraver's dark little shop in Paris, and Charlotte Corday, beneath the elms in the cloisters of the abbey of Caen, were renouncing their Prayer-books for Plutarch's Lives. When Germaine Neckar, with her harsh bizarre features and great black eyes, like blazing

torches, was improvising and addressing on politics and literature the startled *blasé* men and women in the wealthy banker's saloons of the tottering capital. When Théroigne Mérincourt, the courtesan, in the red riding-habit and hat and feather, was decreed a sabre for having led the mob at the taking of the Bastille, and for being the first on the bastion.

And Jacqueline was of young France down to her looks and costume. Her beauty was not her mother's beauty ; her distinction was not her father's stateliness. Her forehead was more full than broad. Her nose was straight and somewhat short, but so also was her upper lip. Her mouth pouted, and smiled as only pouting mouths can smile. Her bright colour was all in her mouth, although her round face was very fresh, soft, and beautiful. There was a dreamy expression on her forehead, and a sweet, vague wistfulness in her mouth when it remained at rest, notwithstanding her eyes being the clear hazel eyes,—part hazel, part grey,—which seem to strike fire with disdain or anger. And, by the way, the French do very well to admire this lovely moorland colour in eyes, but they do very ill to call it green. She wore her own hair, thrown back and falling in long light-brown curls on her shoulders, according to the last mode. She had no hoop. Her gown—a heavy brocade like Madame's, but coffee-coloured in place of sky-blue, girls never appearing in full dress save in the attire of novices—had still a train, which was drawn through both pocket-holes, showing her worked petticoat and pretty feet, on which the buckles twinkled. A fine white

muslin neckerchief was crossed over her bosom, and there was a breast-knot just under her dainty chin. She was as exquisitely picturesque as a shepherdess of Durf 's, done to Madame Pompadour's orders in a tableau on a piece of S vres china. But there was a busy brain throbbing and straining itself under the rippled hair over head ; a warni, pitiful heart, heaving and swelling to meet the brave breast-knot.

Behind the three principal figures were the major-domo, Paul—rheumatic, vinegar-faced, and spindle-legged, a martinet in a short-waisted and short-tailed coat, and knee-breeches of grey cloth, to be as little like livery as possible, but retaining the short sword at his side ; and Agathe, Madame's woman—red-haired, morose, in a stuff gown and little cap, so formal and sombre that she might have belonged to an order of nuns when nuns were in favour ; and Babette. The first two were mere cool shadows, relieving the brilliant figures in the foreground. But Babette, who vindicated the rights of the people, and was only three years older than her young mistress, was more than a shadow.

Babette was strong and thickset. She was brown as a berry ; had a wide mouth, a flat nose, a forehead not above a quarter of an inch in height ; and she was continually diminishing that quarter of an inch by drawing it up into three clear-cut wrinkles when she made a face of astonishment or protest. These wrinkles would be ploughed furrows in her brow before she was thirty. *But she had the longest curving eyelashes, shading*

eyes as black as sloes, and resting on ripe cheeks ; the whitest teeth ; the most symmetrical pillar of a throat. In her golden brown petticoat, her crimson apron with a bib, her lace cap without ribands, but with lappets hanging down on each shoulder, yet not concealing her gold earrings, she was delightful to look upon ; and it was refreshing to be acquainted with her. She was intensely practical in her views, but at the same time she had imagination, she had raillery, she had lively affections. Standing behind little Mademoiselle, and combing vigorously the white silken mane of Mademoiselle's little lion dog Nerina—too wise to resist the rousing process in her hands,—she was herself, and could not be anybody else, or be melted into the being of another, without the Tour de Faye losing a ray of broad, strong, open-air sunshine.

The players lost and won, and continued the struggle, as players are wont to do in the game of life. Monsieur and Madame were pleasantly interested. Jacqueline, the representative of young France, was a little rude, naturally ; cared less for *loto* than she should have cared ; but was restrained from expressing her feelings by the great deference which French children paid to their parents. She no more dreamt of yawning than an English child of flinging the cards in her father's or mother's face. In an interval between the deals, Paul handed round frothed chocolate and mareschino on a silver tray with armorial bearings—three falcons and two savages—not yet confiscated, or buried in the garden. Mademoiselle profited by the diversion, but soon the

interminable round of abstracts, ambros, terns, and quaterns, recommenced.

Then a nightingale out in the bocage began suddenly to trill its plaintive ditty. The sound was very foreign to the scene. And just because of that, Mademoiselle's young heart responded by listening spell-bound, by wondering, growing pensive, wayward, and wild. Her occupation became more and more distasteful to her, her attention strayed, the heat of the room flushed her fair cheek, the perfume caused her youthful head to ache. Like Sterne's starling, she could have cried, "I can't get out, I can't get out;" but she was dutiful, noble, and, *noblesse oblige*, she made no sign.

"I remember playing thus at cards once, when Saxe came in a crac from one of his campaigns," observed Madame. "He was barbarous, that man, though he was a hero. He wanted us to give over playing, that he might write a despatch; but the Abbé Dubois told him, 'Monsieur the Marshal, the French are not used to stir on account of the enemy. There is enough of room in the world, both for our game and your campaign.' And the Abbé had the best of it, though Saxe swore great raw oaths, as he ate raw cabbage, like a German. The Abbé never failed at the repartee. When the Jacobins seized him the other day, and shouted 'To the lamp-post!' he answered, 'Very well, my friends; but will you see the better for me?' Even the Republicans had the taste to let him off for the speech; but unfortunately *he was assassinated* in the next square before he had

time to speak. His hour had struck ; it did not signify," Madame ended, composedly.

A moment afterwards, Madame showed herself ruffled, and gave an elegant wave of her cards towards the cages with the birds, from which a little croaking cry made itself heard. "Agathe, I wish you would look to Eglantine. There is something vexing him. I am sure of it. For these two days, he has not been himself. He makes his breast like a drum. Either his seed is too old, or his pebble of sugar is too hard. He gives me trouble. And then there is Rosette. She will neglect her little ones. Ah ! I have nothing left to care for now but my birds, because I made up my mind, when Nerina's mother died, that I ought not to have her place refilled. I could live and die easier without another darling of a dog."

"I hope your birds repay you the trouble they cost," remarked Monsieur, without the least tone of offence. On the contrary, he proceeded to inquire, with polite interest, "Do they thrive, Madame?"

"Well, it seems when one has only a single thing, that thing must do its best to plague its proprietor. My child, if you make faces in that way I shall faint ; I cannot stand mows."

The last apostrophe was addressed to Jacqueline, who was involuntarily biting her lips.

"My little one," said her father, "a demoiselle's life is too short, and her face too important, to admit of mows."

"Sacristie, Monsieur !" broke in Babette, without

ceremony. "Don't you see, Mademoiselle has the cramps? Young joints are not like old ones, nor young blood neither. Mademoiselle is like Eglantine, she is pining for a breath of fresh air, and a turn of a walk, since there are no plays and balls for her. It is she who will faint, if you confine her longer here."

The freedom of speech allowed to servants in French households, from Molière's time downwards, was a safety-valve which, under the old régime, prevented the domestic life of the country from losing altogether the trifle called human nature.

"Thanks," Madame even acknowledged graciously. "But no, Babette, assuredly my daughter is not so vulgar."

To faint at mows, and to be faint for fresh air, were two very different things.

"For me," added Madame, "I never cared for that dish, nature. Taken by itself, it is as a salad without roast before it, or Neufchâtel cheese after it."

"Pardon, Madame," interposed Monsieur, elevating his eyebrows; "I thought the ladies liked everything for a change."

"That depends on whether the change is worth the pains," explained Madame, candidly. "Let us go on, Jacqueline."

But Monsieur and Madame were good-natured and indulgent when there was no question of interest or honour. At the close of the next game there fell from both of them, alternately, "Say, then, is it so, my child?" "*Then go away: for us, we will play picquet till supper.*"

"But how barbarous you are! What tastes! To go out when the sun is going to bed, except to pay visits before the comedy, and in the country! Fy! there will be the milking of cows, and the dew, and the snails. I always hated sensibility. I always said it would ruin France."

Jacqueline accepted the accusation of being barbarous without demur, and made her curtsey. Madame uttered a little scream, and called her back to make it over and over again, till Jacqueline's knees ached with weariness, while her ears tingled with a running fire of criticism from Madame, and mockery from Monsieur: how like a shot partridge the child was; how she was even as Madame Neckar, who was bad on the legs, could not sit down, and slept standing; how she should walk through a minuet with a sheep for a partner, to cure her of looking as if she were going to bleat; what the old Duke de Rochefoucault had once said of poor Madame de Longueville's dancing—that it was for the air, not the gross earth:—till Jacqueline's cheeks, albeit used to such a fire, were red as her lips, when Madame wound up by informing her she needed rouge to prevent the world seeing that she blushed like a peasant. And Monsieur called out finally, "Good evening, Mademoiselle. My bear, do not hug me. No, my doll, do not lose your balance, or your nose may be shattered; though it is not much in the way;—who knows? If not, we will read the *Henriade* together, to-morrow, you and I. Parbleu! there are some paragraphs about the season of St. Bartélemy's day I have reason to get by heart."

Jacqueline got out of the door ; executed something like an entrechat in the vestibule, little philosopher though she was ; skipped down the tourelle stair, leaving Babette to bring her the curled bunch of feathers which served her for a hat, and, together with the long gloves, constituted her walking dress. At last she set out, attended by Babette, to learn what tune the nightingale was singing to her, and what message the evening star was bringing for her. Loto and Court gossip were all very well at a time ; but, like Paris mud, their smell was sharp to young nostrils, and there was something more in heaven and earth for a girl of sixteen to dream of.

CHAPTER II.

LA SARTE'S FETE—MOTHER AND SON.



JACQUELINE took a turn along the terrace with her hands folded before her, her eyes raised to the sky. Babette walked by her side. The nightingale's song caused her to yearn after she knew not what ; to feel as if she could die of the harmony which stirred the dumb, slumbering depths of her soul.

Babette counted the strokes of the Tour clock as it struck six, glanced down at a roll in her lap, and speculated when Mademoiselle would tire of the promenade, and leave her to follow her own devices.

But there was more to be heard than the nightingale : the landrails from the fields beyond the bocage, and the frogs from the fishponds, rattled and croaked a homely domestic duet, breaking in on the mysterious solo which spoke of love and death and everlasting constancy. Jacqueline liked the duet too, though it woke her from a vision, for she was kindly as well as tender ; and in place of growing ecstatic or maudlin, her mood changed like lightning. She turned briskly to the other girl, in order to prattle and play with her.

“ What have you there, Babette ? Why did you wish

to get away by yourself, my rabbit? Where are you going, and will you take me with you?"

Babette stood still and looked at Mademoiselle. She saw there was no use trying to deceive her mistress when she turned up her little nose in that fashion, and when her eyes sparkled, shone, and pierced every obstacle opposed to them. And Babette, besides, was quite of opinion that there was no use trying to deceive when nobody would believe her. She therefore set herself to answer the easiest question.

"Is it this bagatelle in my lap you mean, Mademoiselle? It is a small piece of fine linen that I span. My faith! how my arms ached!" And she rubbed her rough, dimpled elbows. "The citizen Robinet wove it into a charming little web. What trouble I had to hide it from Agathe! She would have sworn that I, an honest girl, of honest people, took it out of the linen press; she who says as many prayers as La Sarte, and prowls and picks for ever in Madame's wardrobe. She has not her red hair for nothing. 'Distrust the red' is a safe proverb."

Jacqueline was not to be wiled from the gratification of her lawful curiosity.

"But what have you to do with little webs of linen, Babette? Is it possible that you are going to be married without telling me?"

"Hein! no!" denied Babette, reducing her low forehead to two-and-a-half tight cords, and accompanying the feat with a mow that would have sent Madame into positive fits. "I am neither rogue nor fool, me. Besides, *you have promised* to give me my wedding gown, and to

dance in the round at my marriage fête, Mademoiselle. But these are not times to marry. The linen is for La Sarte. She likes nothing so well as linen, though she has so much of it; it is the way of the world. This is her fête-day, and all Faye will be there. What say you, Mademoiselle, if I run down for an hour, and bring you the news? Life is become too sad. We have no fêtes now, save to Madame Liberty; and, my fine! I prefer La Sarte to Madame Liberty. I understand La Sarte better than the other lady; and I believe she can do me more good, or evil."

"Life is too sad," confirmed Jacqueline, pouting. "No more royal hunts in royal forests; no more beautiful plays to be acted with dukes and duchesses. And the real stage is republican, representing such anarchy as 'Robert the Robber.' It is all too rude. Neither youth nor age is courted now. Men have grown above little cares; and negligence is the rule, except among dear, noble old gentlemen like Monsieur my papa. But there has been cause; there have been worse things, my good Babette," Jacqueline corrected herself all at once, looking so exceedingly grave that she went over the boundary line, and became childishly innocent in her awe-struck solemnity. "Do you know that men have eaten bread made of heather, and other poor men have lain eight-and-twenty years in prison without being brought to trial? Eight-and-twenty years! a lifetime. It is quite time,—oh! mon Dieu, it is more than time that such wrongs were redressed."

"I do not know," answered Babette, a little stolidly;

"I never ate bread made of heather, nor anybody in Faye of my acquaintance—only the officer of the king came very often, and salt was dear, and now every one cries 'Peste !' on the paper money, which will be the death of us with arithmetic, if we don't get coin soon. As for lying in prison eight-and-twenty years, I would not have lain eight-and-twenty days, or hours, unless my gaoler had been a were-wolf. Why did men suffer it, Mademoiselle ?"

"If the good God suffered it, it might be necessary that men should suffer it too," replied Jacqueline, in a puzzled voice, but with an accent of resignation. The girl was too reverent and too large-hearted to forsake the Divine Figure bending and toiling under the cross in the midst of the rabble rout, on the Dolorous Way, for the human shapes of Socrates and Plato, discoursing abstractedly in the dignity and retirement of the porch, and even drinking the cup of hemlock juice before a select audience.

A new idea struck Jacqueline : "I will go with you, Babette. La Sarte is a good old woman, and years and virtues ought to be honoured. We are near neighbours, door to door, and Michel is trusted by my father. I also will be at the *fête* to-night ;" and Jacqueline nodded emphatically.

"Not at all," negatived Babette, with the greatest promptitude and decision ; "the inn is no place for little Mademoiselle."

"But yes," maintained Jacqueline, only spurred by the *opposition*. "I have gone to the village *fêtes* before.

The dames and demoiselles of the châteaux used to go to all the harvest and vintage feasts, and to crown the best and prettiest girl. More than that, we are all citizens now ; and we ought to love one another. It is a glorious name that of *citizen*," added the girl, enthusiastically. "I desire no other."

"Farce!" interjected Babette, incredulously, and without apology for her bluntness ; "so long as you read and write, and are wise and gentle ; and so long as Solange, for example, spreads manure, plucks geese, does not know her right hand from her left, and beats the garçon Louis with a rope, I would not give the crack of my finger-joint for citizenship, beyond being fellow-creatures—and I suppose we were that before this hour of the revolutionary clock. Still you cannot go near La Sarte, Madeleine. It is not lucky to go to anybody's fête empty-handed."

"And I suppose it is too late to make my purchases from you, my miser? But here I am already provided ;" and Jacqueline drew from her pocket a little chain of brown hair. "I worked it, and it seems there is nobody who wants it," she said, quickly, with a flash of the brown-grey eyes and a little spasm of the nether lip. "It is a chain to give away, and I give it to La Sarte."

"Holy Virgin! What will La Sarte do with a hair chain?" persisted Babette, scornfully. "Better a new halter for one of her cows."

"Keep it among her treasures. Tie her rosary to it. Twist it round her first grandchild's neck, with a little relic at the end to preserve him from harm. It is to me

equal—— But I go, Babette,” Jacqueline assured her servant, with the roguish air of a good but very natural little child, who has just escaped from strict restraint, and vindicates its lawful freedom.

“ Very well, Mademoiselle,” acquiesced Babette, a little sulkily ; “ it is true the world is going sense above, sense below, that is all. When the demoiselles were wont to come from the châteaux to the fêtes, they were fresh from their convents, and under the wings of the mesdames their mothers, as shy and proud as yon tiresome bird, whose neck I would wring if I could get at him.”

“ Babette !”

“ Ah ! well, what business has he to scream there, and decoy people out for nothing ? Those demoiselles danced in their own field with their own partners—lieutenants of the king, commandants, princes. There were three fields—one for the noblesse, another for the bourgeoisie, and a third for the peasants. Now they are all mixed pêle-mêle. And see what will come of it ! Men are so mad to-day, they will throw their sabots over the moon, let alone the mill—though one woman is as good as another, and better too, to some tastes.”

“ What is that you say, Babette ? I do not understand you ;” and Jacqueline turned round with a mystified air.

“ You need not ask,—Babette refused doggedly to explain herself,—“ for I will not tell you ; and—there, you may fling your tongue to the dogs, Mademoiselle, for you will never guess, never.” Babette crossed her arms *over her roll of linen*, crossed her feet too, and with

admirable power of balance, contriving to poise herself on the points of her square shoes, shook herself from side to side in the most approved style of obstinacy. After this pantomime of a sulker, she started afresh with Mademoiselle, through the deserted gate, into the hamlet.

The auberge was the next house in Faye to the Tour. The curé's house—a whitewashed, red-tiled offshoot of the little church, where the willows drooped over the bridge, and the brook of the Mousse—was nothing to it; and all the other houses were mere cabins. The auberge was at least half as old as the Tour, and quite as large—in a different fashion. It had never condescended to any sign of its character and capacity, save the line ‘Here are lodged man and horse’ in faded paint along its front, and the ever wide-open entrance into the court-yard behind. It was known far and near as the Auberge of Faye, and there was no other. The two-storied building was a simple framework of wood, formed in squares, and filled up with mud and plaster—a composition toned by age and mellowed by weather-stains to an umber, or an olive brown. The upper story bulged out, as if seeking space for the overflowing interior, and was propped up by blackened crossbeams. The windows were latticed and oriel. The high-pitched gables were so numerous, and suggestive of so many dormitories, that instead of belonging to the renaissance of Francis I.—as these wooden houses are said to do,—the auberge might have been a forgotten hunting-seat of Dagobert, which had furnished all his knights with separate accom-

modation, besides supplying stalls for the hunter king's horses and kennels for his hounds.

Doubtless, in the palmy days of Faye, when the Tour was so crammed with gracious company that it could hold no more, there had been plumed beavers, gold-laced green coats, sleeves with great knots of riband, appearing and disappearing behind these diamond-paned windows. Now, the sole guests at the auberge were a sous-lieutenant, who had been a shoemaker or a greengrocer in Paris, hurrying with his ragged detachment of brave, wild men to join the French lines, before the Prussian and Austrian forces could reach Lille ; a gipsy company from Alsace, looking out for fairs, and bringing dwarfs and giants in their train ; a stray member of the gens-d'armes, tying his horse for an hour to the iron ring in the stone at the entrance—quite long enough time to excite general consternation ; and a countryman or two. The gipsy company's caravan and the countryman's waggon had taken the place of the old family coach with its six or eight horses. And instead of the turkey stuffed with chestnuts, and the Chambertin, all the provisions asked for were soup with plums, eggs with tripe, Gruyère cheese, brown bread, piquette, and cider.

But the prosperity of the household had not departed ; it had only changed its source and expression. The old inn had ceased to be a posting-house save in name, but had become very much of a great farmhouse. This, indeed, better suited the requirements of Michel Sart, the innkeeper's elder son, who had bought several lots of the *land Government* had to sell, and was also steward to

Citizen Faye. Work-horses and oxen now occupied the stables ; calves and colts were turned into the herb-garden ; sheep, goats, and pigs trotted into the sheds and ate out of the mangers and troughs where grooms had washed panels gilt over with gods and goddesses, and polished silver harness and silver bells. A wooden gallery ran along the back of the auberge half-way up its height, and opened by successive doors into successive gables, cutting them off and rendering them private property. Over this gallery, where formerly long rows of snow-white napery and clothes had hung to dry, and where smart soubrettes had leant down to inspect the courtyard, or exchange lively greetings with the newcomers, there now were spread sheaves of hemp and flax. Only La Sarte herself, and an elderly country-woman under her, or a staid, heavy farm-servant, clumping about in her wooden shoes, moved here and there, and minded the proper business. Beyond the wooden house itself was the draw-well, in the corner under the cleft elm, with white sand strewn round its mouth, and a rope and bucket dangling. This, and the kennel of the great, gaunt house-dog, Marlbrook, and the swallows' nests in the entrance, were the only things which remained unaltered. Nothing, however, had fallen into decay.

On La Sarte's fête-day every door stood hospitably open ; and Marlbrook, complimented with a bone, signalized the holiday by refraining from growling at the numerous company. The audience room was the great chamber of the house,—a long, low apartment, into

which every guest, of whatever pretension, had always been shown. The King himself, with his diamond star and his riband of St. Louis, would have been shown there ; and for that matter, he was not better lodged in the Tuilleries during this summer of fierce mobs ; and his fare would be harder still in the Temple. There was a cavernous fireplace, with an equally colossal stove, on which were a mass of bas-reliefs in unpolished iron, being records of strange miracles—St. Roque suspending in mid air his falling mason, St. Hubert transforming his persecutors into stags, and a still more potent saint transforming the devil himself into a grotesque, sprawling flea. Almost as lavishly exuberant and wildly imaginative work was on the great black oak chests which stood opposite Michel's bureau, and where La Sarte kept her flour and spice, and household linen. Other works of art—curious old images in wood, whose subjects extended from “the Tree of Love” to “the Seven Deadly Sins”—were displayed on shelves put up for the purpose ; and the corner cupboards were filled with vessels of the Tours porcelain, coarse but gay. In a recess was La Sarte's version of Madame the Baronne's bed at the Tour, hung with faded tapestry, and chiefly remarkable for its height ; so that if La Sarte or any ordinary woman had ever occupied it, she must have mounted to it by means of a ladder. And she would then have found herself in nervous closeness to the ceiling, and been forcibly reminded of La Fontaine's pert critic, with his reflection on the stalks of pumpkins and the branches of acorn-bearing oak trees, as well as

the opportune nap and startling accident which cured him. For La Sarte's ceiling was not bare ; on the contrary, it was garnished and garlanded with all sorts of weapons of offence, from which the tapestry sky of the bed would have afforded little protection. La Sarte's bed recess was also her oratory, at the head of which stood her cup with holy water, and the wooden effigy, in miniature, of her patron saint.

Here, where the steam of many a traveller's banquet had gone up into the pure, sunny air, the evidences of good cheer were not wanting. Rich juicy-looking brown hams depended from the ceiling ; strings of Normandy pippins, onions, and pilchards were festooned on the walls ; a sack with walnuts, and another with chestnuts, stood conveniently near the billets of wood for the stove. Neither had La Sarte failed in providing for the present refreshment of the thronged circle, in the centre of which she sat. The buffet was set out with hot savoury dishes of eels in sailor guise, pigeons with cabbages, partridges with onions ; and these were constantly replaced from exhaustless stores about the stove. Then there were rich balls of paste, Neufchâtel cheese, vine leaves of cherries, Medoc of a fair vintage, and a flask of brandy for the little drams.

Each individual, as he entered, was invited, after offering his congratulations, to retire to the buffet and help himself. All Faye was there—man, woman, and child ; but the men rather preponderated. The gallant Frenchmen did not fail in their homage, especially when, added to the claims of politeness, was the important

consideration that the aubergiste's elder son, Michel, was steward at Faye, and the younger, Jonquille—who not half a dozen years before had been a flighty fiddler—was now a popular deputy at Paris, a still greater man than Michel, and with vast powers of influence and protection in the eyes of his simple fellow-villagers. Moreover, in those days of unsettled rule and apprehended disaster, La Sarte's abundant supper was not to be despised.

The company consisted of peasants, with the exception of Michel Sart, who had risen to the rank of the bourgeois. The men were in holiday costume—grey jackets, long yellow or white vests, knee breeches, blue and white stockings. The women had the cap without ribbons, and the warm-toned petticoat and apron, of Babette. Many of them were young, and exhibited delicate lace of their own weaving in their caps and stomachers, gold crosses, and silver edging to the seams of their corsages. This was not merely for their own satisfaction and that of the world at large, but to gratify the grey eyes of Michel Sart, who was a bachelor—a superb party, who had grown up over their heads, and, had it not been for the Revolution, would have been called by every one Maître Michel, but who gave himself no airs, and was perfectly simple and frank to his old friends. But, as though to include the extreme limits of youth and age in the tribute to La Sarte, both the men and women of the past and the future were around her. There were octogenarians, leaning on sticks bearing Turks', wolves', or boars' heads, *who remembered the Te Deums* for the victories of the

Condé. There were little old women, with merry faces, wrinkled as no gutta percha will wrinkle, who might have been fairy godmothers to fair princesses—asleep for a hundred years,—and who were ready to lead the cotillons to La Sarte's honour, standing in the same dance with their grandchildren, and acquitting themselves with all the vivacity, if not all the agility, of their teens. And there were little marmots of children, wearing high-crowned caps without borders, long-waisted gowns, or vests, and carrying big bouquets of honeysuckle, roses, jasmine, and myrtle, to commemorate the day. They looked more old-fashioned than their grandsires and grandams.

La Sarte was seated in the centre of the crowd, her son Michel standing behind her, like a sovereign supported by the Crown Prince, who is also Prime Minister. She was on a fauteuil, with the gifts of her friends piled about her, at her feet, and on each side:—wool, flax, chickens, a coal-black kitten, eggs, butter, coarse coloured engravings (oftenest of the Virgin and Child), specially blessed rosaries, silk neckerchiefs and handkerchiefs, even chemises, petticoats, and nightcaps. No end to the proofs of La Sarte's mingled supremacy and favour. But the most valuable of all was out of sight. The pretty little white cow, Blanchette, of the rare and valuable breed La Sarte prized, had cost Michel a secret journey of many leagues, and nearly as many Louis-d'ors, before she stood that day in the neighbouring field, her front legs padlocked together, and a bell round her neck.

La Sarte remained on her throne, and took the homage quietly, though graciously. She was a remarkable person, and so was her son Michel, standing there in the golden glow of the declining sun. Yet mother and son were totally unlike. She had one of those thin, sharp, clear-cut faces which match well with an olive skin. Her eyes, like velvet in their blackness, were benevolent in their open good will; but her mouth was firm to rigidity. The face was that of an upright woman. It was merciful, with wells of tenderness deep down in her nature, but not demonstrative or sympathetic. It was a face austere in its righteousness. Such faces are not unfrequent in the country of Calvin, Pascal, and Mère Angelique. La Sarte displayed a scrupulously neat dress, but not finer in quality or different in cut from those which marked the peasant origin of the women around her. Her gown was of dark purple woollen stuff; her neckerchief of blue linen, very pure in the dye and orderly in the folds; and on her head, like many of the older women present, she had a snowy cambric cap without borders, after the fashion of the children, and which, with her brown-black hair removed from her forehead, and concealed under the plain band, exposed her profile, at once strong and fine in its outlines.

Michel Sart was a large, somewhat heavy man for his twenty-six years, with a marked leonine cast of face, and a quantity of tawny hair tied behind in a queue, from a manly, straightforward sense of his rise in rank; a sense *equally* evident in his riding-coat of olive cloth, fine

linen, English long boots, and cocked hat, when he walked abroad. He was an earnest-faced man, with a towering figure, the size and weight of which became him, as his mother's clear profile and brown hue became her. At Faye, Michel was not a hero, like his younger brother; he was that rarer thing, a man who has risen in life without exciting a tumult of envy and abuse. Perhaps the reason was that his acquaintances considered him a little of a boor, and, in spite of his success, called him sometimes "poor Michel," since he made no fine speeches, but was shy, and frequently awkward and brusque. La Sarte, far from being ignorant and apathetic, like the generality of French peasants, had taken care that both her sons should receive a good education; and Michel was even a greater scholar than Jonquille, and was an associate and friend of the cure's. Yet what did that signify when Michel was no orator, but withdrew from notice, and was in constant danger of saying a spade was a spade, with as little tact and discrimination as the greatest blockhead? Still Faye had profound confidence in Michel Sart's judgment and fortune, and justly. Scores, fifties, hundreds of such men as he left the country villages among the five hundred thousand peasants' sons which Napoleon's wars cost France, to return with, it might be, strange vices acquired in their campaigns, but with the accent and the step of command—self-concentrated, steadfast and stern—colonels' and generals' epaulettes on their shoulders, marshals' bâtons in their hands.

Michel Sart was old, in his class and condition, to

have no wife. But there seemed an appropriateness in this, for it was like Michel to be patient and contented with his old mother, who had not chosen a partner for him; to be self-denying and wise, in letting others be mated, while he stood aside, looked on, and waited, till the proper hour and the proper woman came.

La Sarte had named her elder son Michel, because he was born on the day of St. Michel and all Angels, and had prayed that he might be a strong angel to his house and his friends; just as she had vowed Jonquille from his youth to the Virgin, and caused him to wear her colours of blue and white throughout his childhood, that he might be under the protection of the blessed among women for the rest of his life. Who knows how far the names and the prayers from good and honest hearts fulfilled their design?

Such was the scene, such the company, at La Sarte's fête. If the card party at the Tour was like a group by Greuze or Watteau, the assembly in the auberge might have given a subject to a French Teniers.

To the full circle, the Citoyenne Jacqueline and Babette, from the Tour, appeared unexpectedly at the open door, when the topics of the day—the chances of the conscription, the convulsions of the struggle between the Aristocrats and the Republicans, the march of the foreign armies—were under lively discussion.

“If the rogues of Austrians come to Faye,” cried spirited old Mother Petit, “I will fight them with my *distaff and my nails—Go!*”

"Eh! well, if I were only a young girl again!" ejaculated a contemporary with poignant regret.

"If you please, Grandmother Huc?" queried a man.

"I would dissemble to catch their hearts, my son, till scores of them drowned themselves and their fine uniforms in the Mousse—as many a fine fellow at Faye threatened to do for a taste of my lips, my child, before your mother was born."

"But, grandmother, women employ other arms now."

"The more fools they, cadet."

The quaver of the old woman's boasting was interrupted by the shrill exultation of another generation. Pacific, taciturn, obese Father Jullien's wife, who was mortally jealous of her husband's fat, being herself lean, gadding, and long-tongued, was describing with much emphasis and relish how Monsieur the President of the Court at La Maille had walked through the whole town at the head of a procession, leading by the hand the President of the Gossips of the Market, as if she were the Austrian woman herself, in order to show that he was a good citizen, win public approbation, and save his property from further ravages. Now why should not Monsieur the Citizen at the Tour be forced to lower his villainous head, and do the Faye gossips the honour to walk with one of them through Faye?

"Where would be the honour, Mother Jullien?" inquired La Sarte, looking into Mother Jullien's heated, grimacing face with her calm, soft, velvet eyes,—the most republican eyes in the room, if republicanism be freedom,

not licence. "Which of the two would be the honoured person? Where would be the gain, my heart?"

"There would be this gain, La Sarte," growled Sylvain the butcher, who never addressed anybody except by their bare name: "we who crawled behind yesterday would march before to-day. Bah! better than the escort of the late Monsieur,—let him drive my cart, and let me loll in his coach." Sylvain had not dressed for the gala, but had his soiled, purple-stained apron rolled round his waist. He was a coarse caricature, in his shock head of hair, his saturnine face seamed and scarred, and his Rabelais humour, of Gabriel Mirabeau, who laid the axe at the root of his own order, and whom Maria Theresa's daughter met, under the silent stars and the whispering night breezes, too late to save the monarchy.

"You would not find it an easy seat, Sylvain," objected Michel. "Besides, the Citizen uses no coach now; at least we have no horses up yonder at the Tour."

"Hundred devils! The better for the lack of them," shouted and gesticulated irritable little Pepin, who kept the single shop in the hamlet, but had learned to despise the support from the Tour. "We have had horses too long,"—unconsciously identifying himself with the dogs of nobility. "We shall walk on foot at last, and suffer that our neighbours ride. Down with the tyrants! though you have the misfortune to serve one of them, Maître Michel. Rascals! cowards! crush them! annihilate them!" throwing himself into an attitude of fierce attack, stamping his diminutive foot, and flourishing his shrunk arm.

On the instant of the utterance of these words, the late Demoiselle de Faye and Babette crossed the threshold.

"What is it that you will annihilate, Citizen Pepin?" inquired the little Mademoiselle, pleasantly; "the vipers, the owls?"

Everybody started, and recoiled as if he or she had been one of so many conspirators. The old slavish subservience rushed back on the malcontents. Citizen Pepin wheeled round as on a pivot, placed his hand on the confused wrath of his little heart, and bowed, with his heels together, to the very ground. Mother Jullien cringed, and made as if she would kiss Jacqueline's high-heeled shoe. And while the peasant girls were as fascinated as ever by Mademoiselle's gloves and curled feathers, the old women compared her sweet looks to this or that Dame or Demoiselle de Faye long forgotten in the present world. Only Sylvain the butcher maintained his brutal bearing, and stared at Jacqueline till she winced.

La Sarte and Michel rose, stepped forward, and received the new comers with no more outward show than the frank good-will and quiet cordiality with which they had received their other guests. Nevertheless, a vigilant watcher might have remarked that Michel Sart, who was wont to be as immoveable as a rock, flushed scarlet for a moment, while his broad hand on the back of his mother's chair shook like a leaf.

The Citoyenne Jacqueline, who gloried in the name of Citoyenne, came in among the rest of the citizens and

citoyennes, as poor, generous, yet vindictive Marie Antoinette strayed in her youth among the cottagers at Trianon. Waving her little white hands, bidding the company be seated, and rest tranquil, Jacqueline looked round her affably and encouragingly, behaving, without the least idea of what she was doing, like a young princess among her vassals.

The guests at La Sarte's fête being French peasants, sometimes stupid, but always adroit in their stupidity, soon accommodated themselves to circumstances, shook off their agitation, and became interested and critical spectators of the Citoyenne Jacqueline's performances.

Jacqueline wished La Sarte many pretty single-hearted good wishes, and presented to her, with infinite grace, the little chain, woven of the brown hair, with the sun shining on it. It was a light trifle among the offerings there, and yet it was part of the girl's individuality, being the work of those hands unused to work, but made, to judge from their dainty size and shape, for kissing, card-playing, touching the harpsichord, unpicking gold thread, and—well, thank Heaven ! for praying as much as the most work-hardened hands present.

La Sarte was not overpowered, but she was touched. “Thank you, my little lady. How kind you are ! What fine hair ! I hope you have not robbed yourself,” looking at the long thick curls half way down Jacqueline's back. “I should not like that ; but there seems no fear of it. Touch it, my Michel ; feel how fine it is.”

Michel's face flushed again, and he made a backward *movement*, and spoke at first as if he were about to com-

mit one of his gruff, bashful blunders. "Pardon. Judge you if I can feel it with my hand, my old woman?" holding out a great hand, not browner than any hunter's, but certainly tanned like leather. The next moment he proved that extremes meet: "My hand is too hard. I can only feel it thus;" and the massive, tawny lion's head stooped low over his mother's shoulder till the lips touched the chain.

"Maitre Michel is a courtier after all! Go to; see now the world is turning back again. This is not salutation and fraternity; this is homage!" was expressed in condemning pantomime by the audience.

Even Babette gave her head a toss, as if she disapproved of the act of gallantry to her mistress's token. Indeed, it was a fact that the gayer and more condescending Jacqueline made herself, the tarter and tarter her follower Babette—formerly the life of every village fête—became, until it appeared as if she might have been taking lessons from Madame's woman, her rival and natural enemy, Agathe. There were only La Sarte, Michel, Sylvain the butcher (with his half scowl half leer), and Jacqueline herself, who took Michel's act as a matter of course. At the same time Jacqueline opened her eyes with a still more meditative speculation in them than before.

"I shall tie my cross to it," decided La Sarte—"my poor Jonquille's cross, which he forgot when he went to Paris," she added in an undertone; "and then I will remember you in my prayers."

"Do so, my mother, said Jacqueline, gratefully and

humblly ; " and I will remember you, and Michel, and Jonquille ;—only Michel, who is the friend of the curé, has more need to remember a naughty girl like me ;" and she darted a quick look at Michel, who bent his head in acknowledgment of her words, but said nothing.

Sylvain the butcher articulated hoarsely, " Yes, there !" gave an ugly grin, and then sighed in so profound a manner that the whole company looked at him,—an attention which caused him immediately to laugh loudly and make a profane speech. La Sarte, in her turn, spoke to Sylvain a word of grieved, but honest and long-suffering reproof, and the evening's entertainment went on.

Jacqueline ate a bit of a crumpet and a few cherries, put a glass to her lips to the health of La Sarte particularly and the company generally, and then sat down amongst the other citizens,—in the place of honour, it must be told, next La Sarte, fully prepared to join in the diversions.

There were pipes and a player ready for rondes, to please both old and young ; but the amusements began with games, and the first—again after an old custom, better left in disuse at this time—was led by Mademoiselle.

She initiated the circle in " the Garden of my Aunt," saying in her bell-like voice, while her manner, in its utter unconsciousness, was the most perfect manner in the world, " I have just come from my aunt's garden. *What a beautiful garden, my aunt's garden ! In my*

aunt's garden there are four corners," nodding eagerly to each member of the party who played, as he or she repeated her phrases in thick patois :—

“In the first corner
Is found a jasmine.”
“I love you without end.”

(“Say that, Jeanneton.”) Then directing a second player to follow with the second verse,—

“In the second corner
Is found a rose.”
“I would like much to embrace you,
But I dare not.”

(“Charming ! Philippe.”) Still advancing with the game,—

“In the third corner
Is found a beautiful pink.”
“Tell me your secret.”

Then, in the character of mistress of the ceremonies, Jacqueline addressed the entire room,—“Come, let each say to each his little secret, quite low ;” and she inclined her head with an unhesitating charm, to receive the whisper of the registrar Michel. After everybody had copied her sovereign example, Jacqueline held aloft and flourished, like a cobweb in the sunshine, the flimsy snare in the eyes of the players. She recited in glee and triumph the fourth and concluding verse,—

“In the fourth corner
I found a handsome poppy.”
“What you have said quite low
Repeat quite loud.”

And every ignorant whisperer felt like a betrayed, guilty

man or woman as he or she had to proclaim audibly—abashed by the silliness of the sentence—the private communication to the next neighbour.

By rights the gallantly-frivolous French game induces gallant, fantastically-appropriate whispers. One would be a butterfly or a little bird on the jasmine or the pink ; another would shed the rose leaves at a beloved friend's feet. But the heavy peasants of Faye knew nothing of those fine speeches which the working men and women of Paris could have exchanged glibly at the most horrible junctures. Their whispers were of such gross, tangible human affairs as “What dost thou think of that for a fine breast-knot, Margot ?” “Wilt thou be at the mass on Sunday, Etienne ?” “Hast thou seen my brown mare, Claude ?” “What number wilt thou choose for the drawing ?”—varied by such home thrusts as “What hast thou done to big Jean, my fine girl ?” and Babette’s sarcastic address to Citizen Pepin, “Will the red cap give thee a beard, my master ?” alluding to that important addition to a man’s attractions, the few hairs on the sallow, pointed chin, which the small shopkeeper would have cherished dotingly, and whose absence he was understood to regret bitterly.

Sylvain had constructed his whisper into a shallow, hideous riddle : “What lady will soon be alone in France, and wear the brightest crimson ?”

Jacqueline had declared, quite naïvely and earnestly, “My secret is, ‘There is a drop of dew like a pearl falls right down from heaven every night on the hedge-roses, and the mosses on the thatched roofs.’ I would I could

catch such a drop of dew," she continued, wistfully; "but the roses of the Tour are so surrounded with thickets, and its stone roof is so thick."

La Sarte, with the quick intuition of her younger son, the genius in the double-entendre, and with her own long look forward over all the heads, explained, "For me, I said, 'If it is necessary that I be a flower, I hope I may be a sweet-smelling sprig of lavender or rosemary, to scent all the rooms in the auberge, and in Faye, if it were possible, a long time after I shall be transplanted into God's garden.' That would be better worth than to be a crown of immortelle or a cross there."

As for Maître Michel, he was more literal and prosaic than any of them. He had taken the opportunity of impressing on his old lord's daughter, "You will not walk alone with Babette after sunset, my Mademoiselle; I shall accompany you to the Tour."

"Mademoiselle, indeed!" muttered Mother Jullien through her teeth, and sniffed the air with her knife-like nose, "I thought the titles were swept away with the flood!" In spite of this, however, she was ready to throw herself in Jacqueline's way as she passed to the door, and tried to catch her eye as she whined and fawned her good night; for there were still stores dispensed in the village from the Tour kitchen, impoverished as it was. And who knew but some fine day the titles might be restored, and the Sieurs be as awful as ever? It were best to be square with everything. And, indeed, it was all left for her to do, for that ton of flesh, Father Jullien, would not stir, except to take in *more meat and drink* into his greasy carcass.

Jacqueline, in her double rôle of citoyenne and princess,—always unaware that she was playing a part, or doing anything unusual on the clay floor of the village inn,—curtseyed with the low, soft, inclusive curtsey of the exploded régime, smiled blandly, and accepted Maître Michel's escort as simply in the way of his duty.

Babette walked behind her young lady and the registrar,—not sniffing, spiteful, and Janus-faced, like Mother Jullien, for Babette was a greater creature altogether, and scorned and hated the other's meanness and malice,—but cold and stiff with mortification and rage, and making no ceremony in her mental record of her feelings.

The nightingale was still singing its passion in the bocage, and the evening star was shining out over the terrace. Madame and Monsieur had not left off their cards in the hot, heavily perfumed boudoir; or their strongly spiced State and Court scandal; or their elegant follies and cynicisms. Their young daughter was walking the hundred yards with the retainer, by whose side she needed no chaperon, flushed with the honest, ingenuous, warm-hearted pleasure of conferring pleasure; and with a secret, undefined fluttering wonder at her servant's devotion.

Maître Michel, strong, staid, simple, and unpolished, was as chivalrous to her as if he had been a squire of the middle ages, attending on one of the early Demoiselles de Faye. He was just as if there was no turbulent Convention in Paris, of which his brother was a deputy of note; no Jacobin and Cordelier clubs ruling the *great kingdom of France*, and fiercely snatching the *plumed hats* from the nobles' heads.—nay, threatening

to cut off the heads themselves as the mower's scythe crops the tiny clover heads in the meadow grass. Maitre Michel reverenced the ground Jacqueline trod on, noted down every look and word of hers, treasured them up, and brought them out of his long, deep memory every time he could give her a moment's pleasure. She did not know how she had found it out, but she was as sure that Maitre Michel was her most faithful servant, as that the future head of the house of Faye, Achille René, Chevalier de Faye, her splendid young cousin, had been drawn presumptively from the ranks of bachelorhood (to which all chevaliers as well as abbés were wont to be reduced) and was decreed to be her betrothed bridegroom. She knew, too, that the consciousness of Michel Sart's lavish, unselfish service—though she could not render any further explanation of it than that Michel was old-fashioned and loyal, a watch-dog and a lion to the house of Faye—soothed her and gratified her, although she had only a dim half-appreciation of its worth, and was puzzled to sound its depth. At the same time Achille de Faye's fitful attentions, his long absences, his flying visits, and the perilous uncertainty of their connection in those times, filled her with strange chagrin, which she dared not show. Jacqueline was therefore under a happy influence as she walked up the sandy street to the conciergerie of the Tour. She kept prattling to her big guardian, and telling him confidentially, "They are dear, good country people, Maitre Michel,—honest people. I am very glad I came among them. I *love them all*. Ah! well!" correcting herself, "ex-

cept that Sylvain the butcher, who makes my skin feel like a hen's skin. He is as—as one of the satyrs I have read of in the classics. I think,”—she pressed nearer her stout servant,—“I think he smells of blood.”

“I don't know, Mademoiselle, that Sylvain is cruel for a butcher,” Michel checked her gently. “I believe he would spare a beast to suit a fancy; though I have heard say he chose his trade after he was a man, to learn how killing felt for an occupation.”

“Mother Jullien is not sincere. I know she is angry against me because I was Demoiselle before I was Citoyenne. That was not my fault. Yet without doubt these two poor people have had their trials, of which I comprehend nothing,—I, who am a little fool of idleness and luxury. But let us return to our sheep: your mother is a good angel, Maître Michel.”

“She is a good old woman, Mademoiselle,” answered Michel, temperately; “there is not a better old woman in France.”

“That is a true truth, Maître Michel,” Jacqueline assured him sententiously; “but do not call *me* Mademoiselle, when it is no longer the usage,—when we are going back to simple, grand, primitive times—fresh, beautiful times. I—I obey the laws. I wish the poor people who have been oppressed to be free and happy. I am content, proud, to be called Citoyenne Jacqueline; though many demoiselles, who are no better taught, detest and despise the term.” And Jacqueline, modestly sensible of her superiority, threw back her curls with a *stately motion*.

“Very well, Citoyenne Jacqueline,” Michel said hu-

moured her, with a little half-formed, pensive smile about his kind mouth, the lines of which made him look old and tried in the vigour of his prime ; "and you will no longer call me Maître Michel."

"That is quite another thing," ejaculated Jacqueline, thoughtlessly. And the moment the words passed her lips, she had a perception, bred of the complete code of politeness in which she was reared, that she had been insolent. She would far sooner have insulted an equal ; she would almost as soon have struck Babette. A French noble must have far forgotten herself, when she taunted a man of the people, though ever so lightly, with his inferiority of degree. She had flushed scarlet all over her throat and forehead, and hurried to efface the affront by the softest, most caressing words and images she could summon on the emergency.

"You love your mother, Michel Sart." She said the name deliberately. "She has a good son."

"Thank you, Mademoiselle,—Citoyenne," Michel corrected himself, accepting the propitiation quietly. "There is no merit in being a good son to a good mother, who loved me first, though not best."

"What do you say?" questioned Jacqueline, inquisitively, recovering from her shame and contrition.

"My brother Jonquille is La Sarte's favourite son," declared Michel.

"No," negated the girl incredulously, in surprise at the decided statement. "Jonquille is a little more famous than when he came up to the Tour, to play his violin before my music master. Behold the scene :—*Monsieur Cars* is wicked, and sneezes as he takes snuff ;

Jonquille breaks his violin in a rage,—you remember, Maître Michel? you pick up the fragments, and say politely, ‘No, I thank you,’ for your brother, when Monsieur has remorse, fear—I do not know what—and pretends to be generous, and offers Jonquille one of his squeaking, cracked old violins. But La Sarte is not a mere villager—she will not worship her younger son because he is a deputy. Faith of Faye! she has no need. There are vile deputies, as there are noble—noble in heart I mean, not alone in name. The five wise and the five foolish virgins, is it not so? I pray there may not be more than five foolish, as Monsieur my father no longer doubts——But Jonquille is not foolish; only he is not so wise as you, Maître Michel, with all his cleverness. Let La Sarte see to it,” Jacqueline maintained, a little indignantly.

“Pardon, Mademoiselle.” Both of them, in spite of private opinion and private enthusiasm, tacitly returned to the old names. “How noble tongues go! My mother prefers Jonquille, not because he is a deputy, but because he best merits and repays her love.”

“Do you mean it?”

“Yes,” he asserted in his cool manliness. “Why should I not mean it, when it is the truth? and why should I say it if I did not believe it?”

“Why, truly? And you would die for your mother, Maître Michel?”

“I hope so, if God bade me,” he replied, gravely. “He would give me the strength, and it would be my *privilege as well as my duty.*”

“*I believe it, I believe it!*” cried Jacqueline, with a full

heart. "I believe you would even die for us at the Tour," —in a more breathless voice, and with a still more dewy moisture in the brown-grey eyes,—“for me, good Michel.”

“Ah! that would be my happiness, my glory,” broke from the sober Michel, with a ring in his calm voice, and a flash from his reasonable eyes. And then silence descended upon the speakers—only broken by the rich, sweet yearning plaint of the nightingale up in the bocage.

Babette stalked behind the couple fuming and fretting inwardly: “Very good, Maître Michel. You advance, my brave boy! you used to be so modest, you could not embrace a girl after she had danced the bourrée with you—save like a little boy full of bashfulness, holding the tips of her fingers, and just coming nose against nose; —that was all. Now you kiss Mademoiselle’s chain, and you walk by her side to the Tour; and I and my little web of linen are worth nothing. Bah! I have found you out—it was not the false shame, but the pride. You are as proud as Lucifer, my good man; and you prefer to look up to a star, and die or run mad with the longing, to mating with an honest girl your equal. Ouf! what asses and mules are these great, wise, good fellows! Don’t you see, then, that she has no more thought of you, save as her humble servant the registrar, than of a horse or a dog? Little coquette, trifler, actress that she is!—a baby who does not know enough of harm to intend harm, so that I cannot punish her. She walks with you, dolt, because a registrar is not a man. Do you think, dupe, she would walk thus with the Chevalier her lover, her future husband? or that Madame would permit it, or ever have her lynx eye off the child? For me,

I do not know whether I could cry like a watering-pot or scratch somebody's eyes out. But Mademoiselle, though she is conceited, vain, meddlesome, will have enough of troubles of her own,—poor little angel, our Lady aid her! She is as vain as a peacock ; and she has the rage of a fiery, aristocratic sparrowhawk. What does she want with a tame, common thrush, in addition to the other sparrowhawk? But then she is noble to the core. If any one suffers she flies to the rescue, though she should suffer instead. She is brave, daring. Clever though she be, she would no more suspect you of deceiving and abusing her, though you did it under her nose, than of your proposing to strangle her—the darling! No, Maître Michel, it is you who are to be blamed ; you are a great, wise, brave, rich, kind, humble, proud monster. Go! you are not worth a virtuous, sensible girl's regard, if it were not that you would ruin yourself among these aristocrats without her."

After the last extraordinary jumble of epithets, Babette surreptitiously shook her fist. It was a powerful fist for a woman—one that could have caught up a fellow like Citizen Pepin (suspected of having a sneaking kindness for the waiting-woman) by the high collar, and half shaken the breath from his attenuated body. There was modest reticence and a sort of extravagant womanly honour in Babette's unrequited devotion to a giant of a registrar—a man of the physical calibre of Maître Michel.

The gate was gained ; a bow and a curtsey, a snappish *nod and a cordially-indifferent good evening, exchanged* ; *and the ill-assorted company separated.*

CHAPTER III.

A FRENCH LOTHARIO—THE CURE'S WARNING—A SPIED LETTER.



FEW weeks later in the summer the village of Faye was dark in its verdure ; the walnuts were as big as blackbirds' eggs ; the bunches of grapes had lost their faint blue and green, and were deepening into plum colour, or blanching into straw colour, on the cottage trellises. The Tour de Faye was looking more like a lichen than ever, gaunt and grey with golden patches.

Down the hamlet street walked Jacqueline de Faye, in her "mules à talons"—freely translated, Cinderella slippers—with heels which touched the earth lightly. Her train of brocade gently swayed behind her, not dragging on the chaussée, but drawn up in an artistic bunch, like the tail of a symmetrical little bird ; a long-waisted, close-fitting corsage covered her beautifully shaped bust ; clouds of lace hung from her round arms ; while a soft, transparent lace mob-cap rested on her flowing hair, and came across by the ears.

Leading Jacqueline by the hand was her kinsman and elected bridegroom, the young noble, the Chevalier de Faye,—himself a sight gallant and brave, though his fine feathers had been clipped. Instead of the old velvet

and taffetas, he now wore no finer stuff than cloth, like Maître Michel. Like Maître Michel, too, his coat took the form of a redingote, loose as a sack, with long tails, huge collar, and epaulettes turned back the breadth of the chest. He had a plain cravat tied in a big bow; boots à la hussard; his cocked hat on his head instead of under his arm; and his disengaged hand in his coat pocket, à la Englishman or American. The change was significant. The advancing Revolution had only spared the Chevalier one high-bred distinction besides his birth and bearing, and that was his long dark hair, which, though free from powder, was perfumed and partly tied in a queue, partly arranged in side locks, so as to fall curling at the ends to the shoulders, in what were then called Dogs' Ears, which were so esteemed that they were only cut off, or plaited and turned aside, when the dandy head was laid at rest on the block. The face within the frame of hair was languid, and a little supercilious in expression; the mouth was turned down at the corners; the well-moulded and slightly projecting chin was turned up to approach the nose, which was broadish and inclined to flatness; the eyes were long and liquid, but not fully opened; and the complexion was a good bronze. To most people it was a noble, comely countenance enough, but pleasure-loving and sensual, though not without intellect; fond of change, though contented; and quite capable of a sneer. Notwithstanding his being stripped of his old splendour, the Chevalier was a wonderful young fop, who—supposing he survived the *times*—might one day rise up a hero.

It would have been comparatively easy for a woman to resist the Chevalier in his old velvet and gold, when he, like the rest of the nobles, had no higher ambition than to embroider at women's frames in women's saloons,—lower Herculeses, since their Omphales had not imposed upon them the effeminate tasks,—or to stroll in the gardens of the Tuilleries or the galleries of Versailles, pulling the strings which set the imbecile cardboard toys—the pantins—in wriggling motion. The only manliness that was ever heard of in them was their baptism of fire in the wars; their brutal adventures in the little houses near Paris; their gambling away of soul and body at the receptions of marchionesses and duchesses; their bloody duels at Longchamps.

But now, in the gathering gloom of adversity, it was not so easy for some natures to resist the young men heretofore nobles.

Madame de Pompadour's favourite phrase, "After us, the Deluge," was in the act of fulfilment. The early waves had broken over the high heads, but they were dauntless and dignified as ever; while the hard, selfish hearts were learning strange lessons of sympathy and feeling in the midst of vanity and destruction. Boys of one or two-and-twenty were, in a few months, growing esolute, devoted men in that hotbed of Paris, where a moral volcano had rent and scattered all the old elements.

The first wave of Madame de Pompadour's deluge—the wave of Jean Jacques' sentimental brotherhood; the farce of beggars standing as godfathers to children of

men of letters, who wrote in ruffles, with genealogical trees hanging over their heads ; the furor for Benjamin Franklin—had rolled by unnoticed.

The second wave—noblemen constituting themselves tradesmen, in order that they might sit in the Third Estate ; rising and thundering against their own order, and turning and biting their own flesh and blood ; detachments of soldiers from every branch of the service, drinking and huzzzaing with the mob ; trees of liberty ; Phrygian red caps ; oaths to the Constitution ; beautiful women of degree making appointments among the ruins of the Bastille ; nuns driven abroad all over the country, blinking at the hot, broad sunshine ; women of the market insulting Marie Antoinette, while the aquiline nose and the Austrian lip came out, as under a livid light and against a dark background, more prominently than before ;—the waters of that formidable wave too had broken and dispersed, doing little more than foam up mire and dirt.

But more terrible waves were at hand,—waves which brought shoals of gleaming pikes, blood patterning from them like rain ; the guillotine, a ghastly phantom before and after and for all time in the Square du Carrousel,—the Square of Louis Quinze, the Square of the Revolution, the Square of Peace (what will be the next title?) ; everywhere a crowd of unclean, fierce, impious, shrieking demons, as if the mad blasphemy of “ Long live hell ! ” had been heard in high Heaven, and the Pit had yawned open, and let loose its damned crew on accursed France. *Within forty days of Louis XV.’s death, Jean of Beau-*

vais had preached a Lent sermon to the Court on the text, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And Nineveh was falling.

Jacqueline and her kinsman walked down the hamlet street on the very eve of the day when dull, gentle, proud Louis, after having subscribed the "Rights of Man," stood three miserable hours with his wife and children, besieged and bullied in his palace by the scum of the faubourgs; put on the red cap where the crown had been; and tore it from his head when the ordeal was over, screaming, "Madame, did you come from Vienna to behold me thus degraded?" None save the Queen,—"the stranger,"—hoped for the intervention of strangers, which would arouse in Paris the din of a hundred thousand forges. She looked at the moon, and said, "When, in a month, this moon will appear again, I shall be free and happy." Already men like the Chevalier could not walk abroad safely in the streets of the capital and the larger towns, but were forced to daub their clothes, soil their hands and faces, pull coarse, shaggy jackets over their coats, and echo the sentiments of the *Ça ira* and the *Marseillaise* at every gathering and stoppage, at the corners of the streets, and before the bakers' shops, or else become victims to the long pent up and now wildly bursting storm of a people's vengeance. Thinking of this, and looking at the young, handsome, smiling man, who would smile, when he could not pray in the tumbril, it was difficult for any one not to yearn over the sunshiny face,—not to think how short a time had elapsed since the curled head was leant in

childish confidence and security against a mother's knee, and was nestled in her bosom,—not to feel how inexperienced he was (whatever follies he had known) in the great mysteries of life and death,—not to fancy that he who could be firm in death would be faithful in life and love.

What did it matter that these workings of the mind were but filmy threads spinning themselves from the young nobleman's rank, beauty, and danger; and that just as certainly as the old Monsieur de Faye, in his speculativeness, and mild contempt for women, showed a nature leavened with the eccentric, half-sweet sourness of Montaigne; so the young Monsieur—worldly, sensual, callous—had a heart and soul leavened with the bitter yeast of Rochefoucauld, although, at the same time, he loved France, glory, fair women, galloping horses, waving feathers, like the son of the people, Joachim Murat?

Jacqueline was not a sorceress. She did not see more of the young noble who led her along the village street, than his pleasant, picturesque exterior, and the imminency of his peril. Before his arrival, she had often plucked at the tie of betrothal which bound them together, was galled by it, and felt tempted to rebel against it, in her new, half-chivalrous idea of independence, and of disinterested, divine passion. But now her rebellion was quelled. It would be base to break the bond and desert her kinsman in his misfortunes. By the side of Achille, Jacqueline yielded to natural fascination. She kept glancing up at her lover, shyly but willingly drinking in at every look long draughts of *girlish worship*.

Women in France had become less heroic on their own account since the days of the Précieuses, even though they were now amateur republicans. They no longer kept portraits of Gustavus Adolphus and the Condé hanging in their chambers; no longer vowed to them allegiance, or declared they would belong to none less renowned. They no longer needed costly garlands of Julia, with vignettes and madrigals by the greatest artists and poets of a bombastic generation, or the gracious intercession of potent princesses, to bring them down from the clouds to the suits of honest and gallant men. They no longer called themselves Sapphos, or their poor small-pox-seamed, war-worn Pélissons, any fine name that struck their errant fancies. The greater gain to the men, if the women were altogether losers by the change.

Whether Babette was right or wrong in thinking that Madame would never relax the bonds of etiquette, or so far forget the proprieties as to send Jacqueline to walk with her promised bridegroom, here were the two together without premeditation. The Chevalier had arrived the preceding evening without warning (there being small space for warning in those days), had breakfasted alone with Monsieur, and afterwards, by chance, encountered Jacqueline doing an errand with Babette in the village. The lover and his mistress had flown to each other like fire and tow; and Babette looked as proud of the accident as if she had been its author,—as proud as if she were a mother hen clucking noisily to a favourite chicken over a new-found grain of corn.

Babette, in her lace cap, golden-brown gown, crimson apron, and clattering sabots, bridled for her mistress, and bounced for herself, in turn. She did the next thing to calling the whole world to witness the spectacle. She turned up the whites of her eyes ; annihilated her forehead ; protruded her chin in a peak ; swung her substantial but supple body from side to side ; and challenged her acquaintances to remark the pair—not only by the multitude of her becks and wreathed smiles, but by actually hailing them on the steps, in the doorways, at the fountain ; using her shrill voice in such significant congratulations as “What a fine day, Balfe !” “What delights in full air, Madeleine ! Ah, I love to see the happy people. The grapes will ripen as they have not done since we invented the Nation.”

A very different Babette was she from the sullen woman who tramped along, secretly croaking a protest and a denunciation against little Mademoiselle and Maître Michel, as they walked from the auberge to the Tour on the evening of La Sarte’s fête.

The peasants of Faye, notwithstanding their smitten attachment to that rather troublesome invention of young France, the Nation, could not deny themselves so pretty a glimpse of high life, blooming still in its wreck ; and they were almost drawn back for a moment into the old, blind adoration of the nobles. Little Citizen Pepin leaped to the door of his shop at the sound of Babette’s tongue ; and though he started back *somewhat* when he saw by whom she was accompanied,

yet he removed his cap with the slow, reluctant movement of a man uncovering under the influence of a spell, and stood, grinning and gaping, and peering out, with a sheepish, incensed admiration, at the young aristocrats. But when the cavalcade was out of sight, he soon recovered himself, to rave and storm at the serpent's and the wolf's brood. Others than Citizen Pepin—not creatures of Babette—were moved to the centre of their impressionable, impulsive French natures; while the old men and women shaded their eyes, crossed themselves, and were so happy that they cried. It was so like the fine old times when they were young and poor,—Sacristie! they were very poor and oppressed, but there were grand lords and ladies walking over them, who were beautiful as angels, and filled one's eyes and roused one's brain better than snuff.

There was a universality in the charm, for did not high and low rush both to the Tuileries and to Kensington Gardens to see Madame Recamier, when she walked on the common grass, in the common sunshine? And there was only one *rara avis*; but here there were two, both varieties of the bird.

Maitre Michel saw this last glorious display of the quality; went and worked like a horse for the rest of the day,—measuring, summing up, paying wages, repairing dilapidations with his own hands on Monsieur's domain; and returned at nightfall to the auberge, tired like a dog, as he well might be. He sat drooping in the gallery at the back of the house, where he could see, as through a telescope, under the arched doorway and over a thatch

roof, one girouette of the Tour and a corner of the terrace; and where he could listen to the nightingale, which sang again of love and death in the bocage. His mother came out and looked at him with her serene velvet eyes. "You work too much, my little son," she said to the great man. "It is necessary that you rest, though you are strong as a lion. I wish you had a young wife to say to you, by her looks, 'Rest, be gay, Michel.'"

"My old wife," replied Michel, with an effort at pleasantry, and with the fond reverence which Frenchmen above all men in the world preserve for their mothers, and which good Catholics in other quarters of Christendom bestow on the Madonna, "I am content; I want no young wife."

Michel little thought how soon a young wife would sit by his side in that gallery.

To return to the lovers. A shadow fell across their path in the noonday street. It was that of Sylvain the butcher, with his dingy repulsive apron, tucked sash-fashion about his middle, as usual, and this time with the weapon of his craft—a huge, ugly cleaver—poised on his brawny arm. He was tickled, perhaps tormented (for a miserable as well as horrible man was Sylvain), but he was not won, by the proximity of the Demoiselle and the Chevalier. He came forward and made an uncouthly grotesque bow, and flourished his axe.

"Bon jour. Our masters, still our masters, as I see. What news from Paris? How flourishes my brother *in trade*, Monsieur Paris, and his fine family? Is he

still required to do his work in a gold-laced coat, white silk stockings, and pumps? Plenty of work too, eh?" And he felt the edge of his cleaver.

"Back, canaille!" cried Achille, with an outbreak of fiery scorn. "No insolence from such a knave as thou. At least I am master in Faye yet awhile; on the pavé of a hamlet there is not a thousand animals against one man."

Sylvain did not give way, but he suffered the couple to pass him, grinning with a cool superiority that made the blood boil.

"I know the villain," asserted the Chevalier, preventing Jacqueline's explanation. "I have seen him before, and I do not know why, but he forces me to detest him, far below the notice of a gentleman as he is;" and he knitted his arched brows in vexation and spite. "He makes me hot and cold, like a bad omen. I tell you this, my beautiful: if I have a star of destiny and that man has another, my star grows livid and wan when his crosses it,—I am sure of that" He ended with the strain of superstitious fatalism which always attends on an infidel age.

But there were fitter topics of conversation between plighted youth and maid than bad omens, or even stars of destiny. The Chevalier Achille led Jacqueline—followed by Babette at a respectful distance—back to the Tour by the ravine of plum, acacia, and beech trees, which led from the end of the village into the mall. There, under the clear blue sky, in the chequered shade, the verdure, and the seclusion, the two, with their

satellite, strayed or sat upon the mossy bank. The violets were all gone, but the tall, purple foxgloves, the slender, pale harebells (which the French call the nuns of the fields), the little scarlet strawberries, and the truffles beneath the beech trees, had taken their place. Still, the Chevalier and Mademoiselle were the brightest flowers. The two talked as became their years and prospects, while Babette drew forth a convenient piece of knitting from her pocket, clicked her needles industriously, and nodded her head so often and with such fervour, that the milky pillar of her throat seemed no more than sufficient to support it.

The Chevalier told Mademoiselle that he could not join the princes and the army of the Rhine, because he could not fight against Frenchmen, sans-culottes though they might be, or fraternize with aliens to invade his native country ; no, not even on the pretext of restoring the monarchy and the *haute noblesse*. Jacqueline listened intently, and thought these sentiments very generous. If she did not liken her young Achille to the great Achilles (the French of the epoch were well up in the classics), nor think that the army of the frontiers, like the host of Greece, would be lost without his single redoubtable arm, she at least believed in his patriotism and self-sacrifice, and, woman-like, pressed nearer to him, rendering simple neutrality more difficult. How ever, Achille had hopes and intentions which, by lying in close obscurity at Faye, he might be able to fulfil. Trusting that the worst blast of the revolutionary storm *had blown over*, and knowing emigration, too long

deferred, to be now doubly hard to accomplish, he hinted at another and a more satisfactory end to the troubles—the end which had been contemplated before the troubles began. This was the fulfilment of his engagement to Jacqueline, and his living quietly with the family at Faye (his own father and mother being dead) until the kingdom should be restored to peace, right rule, and just supremacy.

“Why should I go away again, my altogether beautiful? I always thought there was much at Faye, but since I came this time, I think there is everything. If you could only suffer me always, Jacqueline, I would be your most humble servant; I am grown humble, I ask no more, my friend.”

The Chevalier only thus hinted his desire, because to express it plainly—nay, even to insinuate it to Jacqueline in the first place, as he had just done—was so glaring a departure from French precedent, that her fresh cheeks were dyed a shy modest rose, and her moorland-hued eyes completely veiled. Notwithstanding, the girl forgave the offence the moment it was committed; and the young man, cool enough and skilful enough to note every step of his progress, had no reason to be dissatisfied with his success. Then he relieved his young bride’s blushes and perturbation by gliding easily from personal to general topics, and entertaining her with a more enlarged circle of principles and actions. Not those of the political clubs and tribunes, which struck him as out of her way, poor little girl! Nor did he speak of the Assemblies, which no person of distinction above

the bourgeoisie dared to frequent, unless under the protection of a powerful Jacobin name. For now the carriage of Fouquier Tinville, public prosecutor, was the only carriage which presumed to roll freely through the crowded, narrow streets where the reckless driving of the coachmen of the nobles had once been a scandal and a by-word, and where listening ears detected beforehand the echo of wheels whose hollow rumble would be the sign of the ghastly banquet of Até and Hecate. No ; Achille descanted on the theatres and the operas, the only amusements left to the French since they had, as Babette said, invented the Nation. He described Glück's "Iphigénie," and "Charles the Ninth," and the débuts of Talma and Mademoiselle Mars, to a girl who had never been in any but provincial theatres, or seen other than strolling stars, and who knew a great deal less of dramatic representation than the old demoiselles of St. Cyr. And when he saw the effect he produced, his excitable French fluency rose to eloquence. He had some taste for poetry, this fine young Monsieur, so he proceeded to spout as well as to describe, with second-hand grace and talent, and that gift of imitation which is alike the strength and the snare of the Gallic races. He was the Cid, he was Heracleus, he was Titus ; until Babette dropped her knitting needles, and threw up her hands in admiration of Monsieur the Chevalier's declamation. Of course she knew no more of Corneille and his brother poets than of so many dancing dervishes, *and with her rampant common sense would have mercilessly travestied their heroics, had she understood them ;*

but she admired the sound of the words a thousand times more for not understanding their spirit. As for Jacqueline, she listened like a dear little country girl, with an unclaimed fund of reverence, admiration, and love, ready to honour all draughts. From thinking Achille's opinions chivalrous and manly she hurried on, with the swiftness of lightning, to set him down as great, even divine; to bow before him like an eastern princess, sun herself in his light, shrink in his shadow, tremble or rejoice at his glance. But she was not so dazzled or weak-minded either, under this mighty power which had taken hold of her, that her faculties could not play. On the contrary, with the strong awakening influence of sympathy, and as iron sharpens iron, Jacqueline's nature began to blossom over and perfume the air, and to answer to her cousin's courtship by yielding to him its best—and that was very choice—in return for his gallant but formal, hackneyed efforts. Like a royal, imprudent merchant, Jacqueline bartered good gold with Achille de Faye for what was no more than highly polished pinchbeck.

Jacqueline was large-hearted, pure, tender, winning, as she began in her gentle agitation to speak of her hopes and fears,—not for herself and her family alone, but for her country and her kind; to breathe her dim aspirations, which to this man were a thousand times dimmer; to chatter of her pets, and to amuse him with her rusticities. He was not like her, he could not abide sacred homeliness; but—one symptom of the corruption of the age—he was enamoured of artificial simplicity.

She gave the Chevalier, in return for his quotations, a quaintly hyperbolical song, Babette beating time with her foot against the trunk of a tree, and humming the refrain heartily. And while Jacqueline sang, her sweet voice quivered a little from nervousness at Monsieur's great connoisseurship, and from confusion at the looks which now loved more and more to rest upon her, and became more and more fixed and ardent after their first languid glances :—

“If the king had given me
Paris his great city,
And it had been necessary for me to quit
The love of my dear,
I would say to King Henry,
Take back your Paris,
I love better my dear, O gué!
I love better my dear.”

Shyly withdrawing from her lover's compliments and allusions, the name of Henry recalled to her the lament for the son of Henry which the journal of the Feuillants, the *Acts of the Apostles*, had just dared to publish in Paris; which, with its mournfully cadenced fall, continually repeated :—

“Louis the son of Henry
Is a prisoner in Paris.”

The all-loyal, half-republican girl could only sing of Monsieur Capet under her breath, even in the ravine of the Plum-trees at Faye, with a face grown grave and timid, as it turned a look of love to Achille, the future head of the family, with its tenfold accountability and *danger*.

Babette hummed no refrain to this doleful ditty, but shook her head in decided reprobation : “For me, I will not waste my breath on the melancholy. And what good would it do the King in Paris if I were to lose my head here at Faye ? My head would be very little to him, but it is something—and a good deal, too—to me. Miséricorde ! these aristocrats, the very best of them, are fools.”

The Chevalier, being an aristocrat, naturally judged otherwise. Listening to the abiding sentiments of royalty and honour, the religion of his class,—piety and the doctrine of the divine right of kings and rulers being in many minds, at many eras, inseparable,—and remembering the gracious words of sympathy and hope which the girl had already spoken for the mistaken people, driven mad by suffering and wrong, no wonder he warmed in his wooing, and said to himself, while he looked down into the kind, frank, high-bred face, raised up in a trustful glow to meet his, “She is an angel ! Achille, you are very lucky.”

On second thoughts, the pair, dallying and prolonging their intercourse, returned as they came, and crossed the bridge among the willows by the Mousse, where the little church, with its red-tiled square tower and its curé’s house, nestled.

There, leaning over the gate of the churchyard, contemplating the graves and crosses,—one of them wreathed with white ribbons as well as crowned with immortelles,—stood Monsieur Hubert, the curé, a brown, spare, but powerfully-knit man of sixty, in a narrow collar,

large three-cornered hat, and long rusty black coat and sash. Jacqueline immediately crossed over to him, and bent her head, while he raised his hands with a slight gesture of benediction before he greeted her and her kinsman. The Chevalier returned the greeting gracefully though indifferently. Babette curtseyed, and then flew off to seize the opportunity of a gossip with a true *commère* at the village well, their tongues running as fast as the water, and their whole bodies aiding in the endless variety of appropriate gesture.

Monsieur Hubert was not of the most striking type of French priests. He was neither jovial, like Rohan, the princely cardinal ; nor was he unworldly, like Fénélon, the saintly archbishop. But there are many men born soldiers ; and such was the curé of Faye, though he was bred a priest. He had a passion for duty and discipline, a genius for command and obedience, while his whole soul loathed dastards and renegades. He was more feared than loved, though at bottom he was a great Christian, and laboured unremittingly in his calling. He was well-born, though with a slender patrimony ; and in his youth he had won distinction in the Academy, which ought to have recommended him to the quality and the *bels esprits*, when plane geometry and algebra were manias with vain women ; but he had never risen above the humblest rank in the Church. In his age he had forsaken his charts and problems, to devote himself to the Georgics and Bucolics, and the ordinary humanity of his parishioners ; a change which should have pleased *the farmers* and peasants in his charge. But Monsieur

Hubert had not a wide enough nature, though at the same time he was, paradoxically, too wide in his temperament for popularity. He was out of the common in his very peculiarities; for while multitudes of Frenchmen were republicans in theory and absolutists in practice,—writing twenty volumes of philanthropy, like Mirabeau the elder, and living the lives of cruel tyrants,—the curé was an aristocrat in principle, and a republican in deed. He associated with the people, worked for them, quarrelled with them, dogmatized and stormed over them, relieved them, and bore long with them.

Madame at the Tour made a wry face at Monsieur Hubert; said he was not of her sort; complained that she could not be converted under him, but had to rely on private repentance, which was not according to rule. Agathe, Madame's woman, was still more against the curé. She threw out dark intimations of Jansenism, and of every saint's turning his or her back on Faye, since the curé dealt sharply with her at confession. Neither was the curé of Monsieur's sort, though Monsieur's misanthropy was much more tolerant. He only said that the priest cut him like an east wind. As for the need of energy in the ecclesiastic, Monsieur could make nothing of that; there seemed to him no more use for it than for the east wind. Then the curé was allowing himself to degenerate; but that was his affair, not Monsieur's.

It was some compensation to Monsieur Hubert that those who were fond of him had unqualified faith in

him. And among them were Mademoiselle and the Sarts. He, however strict and wise, had never lost patience with the child Jacqueline in her catechism ; and while he taught her to respect himself, he had given her a rare glimpse into the genuine goodness of his heart by rewarding her with introductions to his pets. For the curé had pets, and a variety of them,—turtle doves, a Persian cat, an eel in his well,—and was as scrupulous and thoughtful in attending to them as he was assiduous in preaching and teaching, in bleeding and physicking the people. With regard to the last department of his office, he had more than the usual parish priest's or philosophical Monsieur's acquaintance with surgery and medicine ; and he gave advice, drugs, and kitchen stuff to all who needed them, until he pinched himself in his own temperate requirements. Ay, and he looked fierce, and was not grateful, when his parishioners and patients spoke of rewards, or offered him presents at Christmas and Easter. And thus the shallow-minded and purely sensitive among them learned to regard him as the obliged person, and themselves as rather ill-used than otherwise by his cares and sacrifices. In truth, the curé was the veritable aristocrat. He relished conferring favours, but he could not stomach receiving them. And he was forced to take the consequence of what was a proud, ungenial flaw in his gallant character.

Monsieur Hubert had not taken the oaths under the change of government, and his connection with his flock *was now about to be formally dissolved*. A priest who

had sworn to the new constitution was to supersede him in the small dignities and emoluments of the parish; and he was about to set out to join a brother in blood and in orders, whom he had got permission from the bishop of his diocese to visit at Namur.

Jacqueline thought to take leave of her spiritual father when she crossed the bridge, and it was by way of dulling the pain of parting that she recurred to an infinitely sadder, as well as more irremediable calamity, and said, looking over into the churchyard at the cross with the white ribbons, "Ah, my father! I see the poor Bénigne's companions have not yet forgotten her. Dead at twenty, alas! what a frightful affliction to her friends! What are all other misfortunes compared to this cruel death?"

"Do you think so, Mademoiselle?" asked the curé, abruptly, facing quite round on Jacqueline and the Chevalier, and casting a keen glance at them from under the white eyebrows, which contrasted broadly, but not discordantly, with his hale, sunburned face.

"Without doubt," asserted Jacqueline, wondering at his implied objection. "Although I am a Christian and believe in paradise, and although I pray the good God to reconcile me to His will, I think death is terrible to the young and the happy." And Jacqueline, in her own youth and light-heartedness, and the subduing glory of the last few hours, shivered as she looked at the virginal ribbons,—the peaceful, cherished, consecrated grave.

"I have seen things more horrible," averred the curé, still looking intently at the two with his brown set face, and speaking with a repressed fervour which he did not

always show on the tribune. "Pardon, and listen to a sermon, my Mademoiselle, not in character, and not often preached in the ears of such a young girl as you. My sermon shall consist of warnings. I have known a poor lost creature decoyed and dragged to sin and shame—— The priests employ hard names, Monsieur," he interrupted himself to reply to the undisguised annoyance of Achille de Faye at so unusual a discourse addressed to a young, unmarried, noble woman; "betrayed, I say it, by her adopted mother and her pretended benefactor. You may have heard of her as the beautiful, broken-hearted Circassian, Mademoiselle Aissé. I have seen, again, a gifted, diligent, learned woman, though she was brown and lean as a weasel, mad to be a beauty, and prodigal in Pompons. She could translate the *Principia* of Newton; but she could not conquer her petty ambition, or restrain her frivolous extravagance, or keep the straight line in morals which an ignorant, brutal peasant's wife can preserve. Allons! she was the Venus-Newton of the great Frederic, the Divine Emilia of Arouet Voltaire. I have been received, too, plain as I am now, in the bureau of Madame Dudevant, whose wit was nearest to that of the philosopher of Ferney—the sneering, snarling man whose body was like a lath, his nose and chin shaking hands, and whose head we worship because it is so like an inspired monkey's. If monkeys could reason, their reasoning would be as fine and cutting as his. But in that bureau (they said the most unique in Paris), as if it were in revenge, where the *conversation* was perfectly heartless, and the gross cor-

ruption universal, the presiding genius of the place—whom God had afflicted with blindness,—who had been daughter, wife, and mother, exclaimed to another woman, less denaturalized, ‘Ah! you are very happy. I never could love anything.’ In fine, I have been at the Court when the Pompadour reigned in the costume of a Diana, or of a nun; when ladies of quality were her waiting-women, and a Knight of St. Louis (pardon, Monsieur !) her steward. And she forced us into a war with Prussia, and cost us millions of treasure and seas of blood, till cruel death, as you call it, came, and her dishonoured corpse was hustled out at the back door of the palace, the King, her master and her lover, looking after her, and, shrugging his shoulders, observing to her old parasites, ‘The Marquise has rainy weather for her last journey.’ Now, are not these things more terrible than death, my child?” he finished, dropping his voice, and passing in a bound from irony to deep, rueful pathos, all the more impressive that it was unexpected, and only to be found in the man on rare occasions.

“Oh! yes,” sighed Jacqueline, shocked and grieved ; “but why do you tell them to me ?”

“Why, indeed, Monsieur the Curé ?” remonstrated Achille, warmly. “I grant vice and death are everywhere ; but say, then, was it necessary to affront Mademoiselle Jacqueline with these miserable recitals ?”

“I have never believed ignorance to be innocence,” said the curé, dryly ; “nor found the daughters of the noblesse, taken out of their convents, more virtuous women than the daughters of the peasants, brought up

with their brothers and their brothers' companions in the fields. It depends on how you treat the truth. You remind me, Monsieur, of an old picture—I think by Orcagna—in the Campo Santo of Pisa. A gay hunting party have come at a turn of the road on the corpses of three princes, when an impatient man looks aside and holds his nose, while a patient woman leans her head on her hand and contemplates the spectacle. The moral is quite simple. There are some who only distinguish the stench in vice and death, but there are others who meet them with a divine pity, an eternal life. It is because I know Mademoiselle to be good and true that I have thus spoken," said Monsieur Hubert, with a gravity which was far removed from compliment, "and because it may be the last occasion—you comprehend?—on which I can address to my pupil a word of counsel before the snares of the world are around her, and she has departed beyond my power into quite other hands. I quit Faye in eight days."

"So soon, my father?" said Jacqueline, hanging her head, notwithstanding her previous knowledge of the event, and wondering, with a pang of intuition, whether she would ever again have such another friend, who would be like a rock on which she could lean, and who would ask nothing from her in return but the ennobling remembrance of her highest interest. Soon Jacqueline forgot all this, but now she was saying, and meaning it, "You have been too good to me. Oh! I will do all I can to show that I have profited by your lessons."

Even the Chevalier, who saw clearly that the curé

distrusted him, was at once too magnanimous and too careless to resent the injury. What was it to him that a railing, reforming old priest, the representative of an institution as near the wall as his own, undervalued and was disposed to suspect him? So he took off his hat and bowed punctiliously : "I thank you in the name of Mademoiselle my cousin for your sermon. Permit me, on my own account, to assure you"—and the young man looked with a triumphant, fearless, not unfriendly expression at the priest, before he looked lovingly at Jacqueline,—"Permit me to assure you that I am sorry that your absence will prevent me from engaging your services in a personal matter,—a matter entirely between ourselves, you comprehend, Monsieur the Curé?—yet not at all without the consent of Monsieur and Madame."

"Thank you, Monsieur. Ah! Well, I could not have done it without both pleasure and pain," said Monsieur Hubert, plainly, accepting the propitiation with a *sang froid* and a reserve all his own.

Monsieur Hubert continued leaning over the church-yard gate, and looking after the lovers till they were halfway up the village street. "He is not very bad, that boy, for a noble," he mused ; "and they will be purified should they ever come out of the furnace. After all, they have some faith, while the middle class is fast losing itself in the sans-culottes, and sinking to their level,—adopting domestic virtue of an unconsciously Christianized pagan kind, together with the cold reasoning of deism, the selfish calculation of money-making, and the outrageous excesses of a rank, wild

libertinism and atheism. There is no soundness and no germ of a higher growth to save them. Though he is not very bad for his lot, that young chevalier, I fear for my girl Jacqueline. I could have more rest in my mind for her—my best friend, after Michel Sart, old fool that I am—if she lay here beside the poor consumptive Bénigne, than going there, healthy and radiant, thrilling in every nerve, with the handsome aristocrat, who may weary of her and be false to her in a month, if La Force and the Luxembourg spare him so long, and he be not guillotined and she be not an inconsolable widow within the time."

"Man proposes, but God disposes." Within a few days the Chevalier left the Tour, not alone, but accompanied by no less a person than Monsieur. He was going on business to the next province, with the intention of returning to Faye along with its master, to proceed briskly in the preparations for his establishment in his future home. But instead of this, Monsieur returned without the Chevalier, very cynical and very gentle, as he was wont to be when things went particularly wrong with him. Then followed, not the Chevalier, but a note from the Chevalier to Jacqueline. She was much fluttered by a liberty and an advance to intimacy so uncommon. The note was short and constrained, and more flighty than expressive of ardent affection and devotion; but the circumstances which called it forth excused the indiscretion even to Madame.

"My much-honoured and well-beloved cousin," it ran, "*I am forced to write to you to beg you to let me know*

whether Monsieur your father has returned in safety. I fear to address himself, lest the letter should miscarry in his absence; and to write to Madame might attract more attention than to write thus to you. I have bad news, my beautiful. The entire proscription of the priests, and the ruin of *him* who has been resisting it, is too sure. Our rents are gone to the last farthing. The powers won't even leave the *quasi* nobles their pigeon-houses to take refuge in. Oh, Jacqueline, if you hear tidings you did not expect, remember I can no longer help myself, while I remain always, your faithful friend,
ACHILLE RENE DE FAYE."

After the excitement and glory of receiving the letter —during which its contents were of no consequence,— Jacqueline was a little puzzled and pained by these lines. Nevertheless it was her first letter from Achille, and she thought it a very interesting letter, in its half mournfulness, half recklessness; and was very much obliged to her parents for their permission to answer it.

Jacqueline was in her own room in Madame's tourelle —a novice's room, fresh and simple, all draped with spotless white dimity. Her presence was further indicated by her birds, her little lion dog Nerina on its cushion, and her books: a translation of *Clarissa Harlowe*, and still more doubtful works, such as the *Nouvelle Héloïse* of Jean Jacques, close to the *Imitation* of Thomas à Kempis—books, indeed, which cannot be mentioned without an explanation that their presence was another testimony that "to the pure all things are pure," and that such proximities existed unchallenged and un-

condemned in the most virtuous houses, and under the eyes of the most innocent girls of France. Standards as well as generations change. When Marie Antoinette had to make application to the Convention for a book to instruct and amuse her little son, her selection was *Gil Blas*.

There was Jacqueline, seated at her desk, prepared to answer her letter,—her lace sleeves tucked up from her fair arms, her light brown curls shed back from her open forehead. Madame de Sevigné might write quires of paper from Brittany to her daughter in Provence every week of the year; and of course writing was to her but another and only less delightful mode of speaking. But ladies who had much ado to live, to whom mere life became a stirring excitement, grew chary of their letters in Jacqueline's day. And this was Jacqueline's first love-letter.

Strange to tell, the words were slow of coming, and Jacqueline tapped her white forehead with her pen very importunately, and sat with her curved red lips apart for a long time without result. If girls will fall in love with their own fancies in the shape of handsome gallant young men, with whom they have nothing else in common but youth and station,—with whom they can have nothing like communion, and of whose sneers, when they are not with them and dazzled by their fascination, they have a very lively apprehension;—then, of course, letter-writing, even to the clearest-minded and the most single-hearted, will be a perplexing, laborious task.

"My much-honoured cousin," Jacqueline began, in the same high and kingly strain as Achille, but thinking it more maidenly to leave out the other clause of "well-beloved," even to her promised husband. "I am very glad to inform you that Monsieur arrived at home three days ago, in good health, and not too much fatigued by his little journey. I am very sorry for your bad news, Monsieur." Pausing, at a loss what next to say, Jacqueline raised her head, and saw reflected in the diamond-shaped mirror opposite her, the broad, warm, shrewd face of Babette, her solid throat elongated and stuck out like the neck of a goose ; her wide, expressive mouth screwed into the small dimensions of a button-hole. Babette had learned to read and write along with Mademoiselle at the Tôur ; and here she was, making use of a part of her accomplishments, without her mistress's leave, over her mistress's shoulder. The result may be guessed.

Jacqueline was indignant ; but the group was comical, and there was no harm done. On the contrary, the interruption freed Jacqueline from the horns of a dilemma. She did not turn round, but wrote in a legible hand, "I would say more, but my maid Babette is standing behind my chair, reading what I write." A loud thump was heard almost simultaneously with the penning of the sentence. It was Babette leaping back as far as the wall of the room would let her ; the same moment she cried, in a tone of insulted innocence, "Me, Mademoiselle ! I assure you I have not read a word!"

"Oh, Babette, how droll you are!" protested Jacqueline, holding her slight sides, and shaking with a peal of girlish laughter. "You will make me split with laughing. If you had not read the accusation, how could you have known that I blamed you? Oh, you are caught, caught, my good Babette!"

"Yes—there, Mademoiselle!" Babette threw down her cards instantly, turning from a rose to a peony, but submitting to fate, and not losing sight of her philosophy. "How can a poor girl like me practise the reading and writing your family were so good as to give me unless in stolen mouthfuls? and how am I to gain knowledge otherwise I should like to know? But I would never betray you, my little Mademoiselle," concluded Babette, at once altering her tone, and speaking with an imploring vehemence quite different from the beginning of her confession. "Never, never!" And great Babette set herself to sob and cry like a convicted, but falsely judged baby.

"My life! no, my girl. Why do you make so much work about it? You are not a Judas." Jacqueline hastened to pet and comfort the older girl, patting her on the shoulder, and caressing her. "It is not for me to listen at doors or read letters over people's shoulders. I was not brought up to that; but I suppose it runs in the blood of femmes-de-chambre. Though, if I were you, Babette, I would be more than a femme-de-chambre: I would be a true and noble woman, like La Sarte, on whom everybody can rely. As for *betrayal*, I would as soon suspect myself of treachery,"

and Jacqueline threw her arms again round the neck of her old playfellow and lifelong companion, who hung her head, wiped her black eyes with her bright-coloured apron, and writhed in the kind grasp. "I had no more to say to the Chevalier, Baba, that is the truth ; and this end, which is also the truth, is as good as another, and saves the anguish of composition. You, Barbe, wait till I sign my name, and see my letter an accomplished fact."

"If I were you, I would put something more tender, Mademoiselle," suggested Babette, with a little diffidence because of her late transgression. "Suppose the poor Chevalier is to wear it in his bosom till you see him again, and waste it away with a hundred thousand kisses. Sainte Geneviève ! I would give him something better worth wearing and kissing."

"Fy, fy ! to bid me write words of love to a man who is not yet my husband. I wonder what Madame would say ? Wait till we are married, and then we shall see—we shall see how I will love the poor, brave boy. He is so brave and so handsome and distinguished, Babette, like—I do not know what," broke off Jacqueline in simple ecstasy.

"I know, Mademoiselle," chimed in Babette eagerly, with a smack of her lips ; "he tastes like well-sugared biscuit and sparkling gooseberry water. Is it not so ?"—sending Jacqueline into another fit of giddy laughter.

Very soon she was to laugh no more ; and already she was calmed down by one of those intuitions which come most frequently to children and childlike men and

women. For speaking pensively, almost mournfully, she said : "As to wearing and kissing my letter, my dear, that is no longer the mode ; and Monsieur Achille is very much à la mode. He loves me in his own way when he is by me, I believe ; and you see by this letter he remembers me a little when he is away from me. But what would you ? He is a man of the world, and a nobleman ; and though his beard is not full grown yet, he is so much wiser, more clever, grander than I. Do you think I did not notice that ? Still I shall be Dame de Faye," put in the girl, drawing herself up with pretty, assumed, hereditary dignity. "However, he is a chevalier so proud that I predict it will rather be me who will wear and kiss his letters. And what will you again, my Babette ?" she finished, with a revulsion of feeling, throwing off her pretty air of stateliness, and looking beautiful and womanly in a faint glimmer and glory of self-sacrifice. "Should not the woman love the most, since we are not on a desert island to be everything to each other?"

"I do not see that the woman should love the most," argued Babette, doggedly ; "but she does it, fault of me !" she admitted, impetuously. "I am bound to confess it. I think it must be as a punishment for her sins, because she gave Monsieur Adam that miserable apple in the garden, which sticks in the man's throat to this day."

Does the woman love the most ? My friend Babette, you may live to find out in your own experience.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST OF THE EMIGRANTS, PETRONILLE DE CROI— BABETTE'S USELESS PILGRIMAGE.

IFE went fast in France during the Revolution years. The whole course was got over in a few months or even days, without the slackening of bridle or girth. "We live ten years in twenty-four hours," said Manon Philpon, after she was the wife of the Spartan Frenchman, Roland de la Platière ; and the poor Filla Dolorosa—the prison flower—passed from youth to age in that brief space which cost her her father, mother, aunt, and little brother.

Monsieur the Curé had celebrated his last mass, taken leave of his sheep, and was gone. When he stood and faced the flock as their shepherd for the last time, he told them in his sonorous tones, which inspired strong confidence, because they never faltered, " My children, you and I are joined in wedlock before the Lord, in a union which cannot be broken. I am yours and you are mine. I do not know if I will see you again ; but if the Lord send better days, and if He give me life, I will come back to you." And the listeners—not only those who loved the valiant brown face, but many who shrank

from it, some even who hated it, were assured that the man who had fought against their sins and stupidity these thirty years, would keep his word.

The *Ça ira* and the *Marseillaise* had come to be sung in din and discordance within the royal chapel of the Tuileries. "He hath put down the mighty, and exalted them of low degree," was the text thundered into the quaking ears of princely worshippers. Another insurrection—that of the 9th and 10th August—had broken out at Paris, when the Swiss mountaineers died in vain for French royalty. Louis and his family took refuge in the National Assembly, and sat fourteen hours in the reporters' box listening to the suspension of the royal authority, and the practical deposition of the king. Yet he was able to eat the wing of a chicken and drink a glass of wine, just as he had called for bread and cheese when stopped at Varennes ; while Marie Antoinette, her blue eyes tearless, but her Saxon hair blanched white, flushed darkly at his supineness, and needed no refreshment to help her to clasp her sleeping children to her knees. She showed herself to be, as she was termed, "the best man among them." The next movement of the poor helpless martyr family—one of countless martyr families, and only conspicuous in its reverses and its misery—was to the Temple.

In the meantime the announcement that Paris was given up to blood and fire, and the country in hourly danger of invasion, travelled fast to the provinces, calling forth rushes to town-halls, harangues of heated citizens, the assembling of the National Guard, the waving of

flags, and the stirring up of passions already brutal in their fury. France was girdled by enemies—Prussians, Austrians, Spaniards, Sardinians. At Paris the church bells were torn down, and the very leaden coffins of the dead dug up, to be melted and cast afresh into munitions of war. Leather-skinned bands of Marseillais, like raging beasts of prey, came to Paris on the invitation of Barbaroux, still better to teach the Parisians their hymn. Ishmaelites of a vitiated civilization, whose hand was against every man and every man's hand against them, who were aliens to the mass of the population,—branded men of the hulks and the galleys, utterly debased and ferocious, drawn by the scent of carrion and plunder,—were streaming singly or in tens and scores along the roads to Paris.

It was the lull before the wild roar of the tempest, but had every symptom of a tremendous battle of the elements. And an awe fell beforehand upon the quiet, passive inhabitants of the country. The remnants of the old dominant class, lingering and lurking in their retreats, were looked upon, in the sultry, stormy August weather, as hordes of secret plotters, among the full grapes, waiting for the vintage and the slaughter.

The very air must have been oppressive, and laden with portents ; for even children and dumb animals—girls like Jacqueline, who laughed no longer, and her silky poodle Nerina, which whined and begged because its mistress had ceased to play with it—panted and cowered under the fatal influence.

Jacqueline danced no more gavottes or entrechats as

she escaped from the evening card party. For card-playing, like eating and drinking, continued ; the seniors, however chilled and heavy at heart, being consummate masters and mistresses of their outward behaviour. And the girl had no heart to act differently from her elders, her youthful laughter having died away in a qualm of fright and dismay. She boasted no more of being Citoyenne Jacqueline, which was destined to be her distinctive name. She began to wonder piteously whether it was worse to eat bread made of heather and die of hunger, like the wretched peasant from whose deal coffin Louis the Well-beloved backed impulsively, as he hunted in the forest ; or to weep day and night in the Temple ; or to have relations dragged from her and shut up in some of the numerous gorged prisons, never to be heard of again in this world, though their blood should cry day and night for vengeance to the Lord of all worlds ; or to be herself caught, shamefully entreated, and murdered. She had sinned against God ; but what ill had she done to the world ? Her heavenly Father had pardoned her—would not her human brother, too, pardon her supposed offence, whatever it might be, and spare the young life, the taking of which could be of no avail to the thirsty soil of France, parched and gaping as it was for blood ?

But if the worst came to the worst, could not Jacqueline make her death of some avail ? Might she not be strengthened to offer the sacrifice which was so small, but which would be accepted because it was her all ? Yes, Jacqueline moped and dreamt. She was haunted

with that feverish, morbid ghost of heroism which drove on the young girls of France, and wooed them with the ghastly glamour of horror to ponder over the story of Jephthah's daughter among the mountains of Israel, and of Judith in the Syrian camp. The times were so unnatural and exceptional, that they pointed to an unnatural and exceptional deliverance. French girls have a predisposition to such half-sublime, spectral delusions, derived from the story of the Maid of Orleans, whom Frenchmen of the Greek and classic era scoffed at, but which Frenchwomen devoutly believed. Already Charlotte Corday, with Corneille's blood in her blue veins, and his moon-struck, one-sided noble rant on her passionate scarlet lips, read of the Hebrew women, on her simple white bed, or in her country walks, where the breeze blew over the fruit-laden orchards, and over the briny waves that wash green Normandy. Woe to her ! for that was long after she had ceased to read of the Canaanitish woman, out of whose daughter the Son of Mary—the good Master, the God of Life—cast the devil, whose serpent tongue might have one day hissed into her ear that she was exalted above all law, human and divine—that crime was virtue and death life.

Jacqueline was delivered from this strange danger by the armour of faith, which continued to gird her tender spirit. Reason was too threadbare, cold, and loveless a garment for her warm, reverent affections. Her God was somewhere in yon blue sky ; He cared for her, had suffered for her, though He mysteriously permitted these sufferings around her ; and the words He had left her

were, “Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord;” “Love thine enemy; do good to them which hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.”

And she was but a girl, whose mind was diverted from the delirium of these visions by a private grief, in the midst of the general affliction. She had neither seen nor heard of Achille de Faye since his visit and his letter; and in this interval her marriage with him for the present had become purely impossible. Would the Chevalier’s life be darkened if she were killed by accident in such a massacre as had occurred in some of the unhappy districts? Or if she did some dreadful act, and were killed by design, would he mourn a little for her? Or, worse still—and the thought wrung tears from her—had Achille forgotten her so speedily? Would he seek her no more? Had he cast her aside in their common misfortunes as an incumbrance and an affliction? She was so young and so humble, even in her spurts of haughtiness and wilfulness, and in her French girlishness, that she had not woken up to the woman’s pride which would yet blaze out and scorch up all such tears.

In this convulsed state of existence, it was a relief to the inhabitants of the Tour de Faye to receive a letter from a family of old friends and equals, announcing a visit, and soliciting a few days’ lodging. The friends were Monsieur and Madame de Lussac, and their widowed daughter, Madame de Croï.

This family had been so fortunate as to procure, *through* powerful influence, one of the latest passports

for emigration, and were now on their way to the nearest coast town. It was not safe or friendly for them to lodge in an inn. The occasion was ominous; but the tidings sounded like a return to the old order and the old courtesies of life.

In the thought of receiving visitors and entertaining guests, the family of Faye were tempted to forget the times, to forget that they themselves were in threatened straits for provisions to supply their own daily table, and would be in actual want were it not that Maître Michel the registrar, and his greater brother Citizen Jonquille, the deputy up in Paris, were honest and true, and prevented the impending confiscation of the whole Faye domain,—refraining from serving themselves as heirs to their old feudal lord, like other registrars and deputies. And in the thought the poor aristocrats of the Tour, living from hand to mouth, on the favour of their servants, accomplished a more splendid feat: they nearly succeeded in blotting out of their minds that their necks too were confiscated to that colossal, deformed idol the Nation, growing in its huge, misshapen bulk while men slept. In truth, if the unhappy nobility of France had not had the faculty of throwing off their loads, and disporting themselves now and then, they would have been crushed betimes, and would not have required to be guillotined, drowned, or shot.

When Jacqueline learned, by the credentials of a courier in advance of the glass-and-leather berline, that the Chevalier—her kinsman, lover, bridegroom—was actually in the train of the Lussacs, travelling to greet

her again, she was excited beyond measure, was inconsiderately gay, and unscrupulously blest. What were the privations and risks of next month, next week, to a girl of sixteen, who had the restoration of her lover, cheerful company, grand society, and three clear days before her?

What a running up and down in the old Tour de Faye, on the part of its sadly abridged staff of domestics and their leaders! How old Paul's stiff joints creaked; and how Agathe, with her red hair and ferret eyes, groaned ostentatious Aves; and how Babette screamed and scolded, and bore out the carping assertion, "Women scream before the culprit appears, and for a century after he has vanished!" And so with the satellites in the lower regions—the cook and the porteress.

How witty, and not at all incommoded, Madame was, in her distant audience chamber. How amused Monsieur was in his philosophical way, until the fracas became so deafening that he had to betake himself to his tourelle, and leave the combatants to conduct the engagement without restraint from his presence. How Jacqueline ran about with the selfish, fond, foolish song ringing in her ears, "He is coming again. What does it signify though Prague was taken once? It is he. He will be here. I shall see him. What will Madame de Croï be like? She is beautiful and admired. Does he admire her? What shall I wear to be amiable in his eyes?" Oh! how much better it is to look down the dusty chaussée, among the walnut trees, for the great *chariot*, than to watch Sylvain the butcher hailing the

horrible ragged wayfarers, questioning them in their rough patois, treating them to a glass of cider, talking and laughing with them in loud speech and laughter.

About an hour past noon, to the “crack ! crack !” of postillions, the ringing of bells on the horses’ trappings, the rattling of wheels, the barking of imprisoned dogs, and all the old pomp and circumstance—the carriage clattered and tumbled, under its mountain of luggage, into the gate of the conciergerie, and then up to the Tour.

Out of it leaped lightly the elegant Chevalier. Then a little old man, with powdered toupee, little three-cornered hat, silk stockings, and old velvet coat complete, stepped slowly down. Behold Monsieur the Marquis de Lussac, of right noble lineage, and once owner of a princely extent of territory. He is luckier than most émigrés, and has part of his large fortune securely invested in foreign funds, sufficient to maintain his family in affluence, and to afford a fresh dowry to Madame de Croï, his daughter,—a childless widow, the hoards of whose late husband were swallowed up in the insatiable coffers of the Nation. Monsieur the Marquis felt carefully and apprehensively, with his five long delicate-looking talons, surrounded by fluttering cobweb cuffs, in the cavernous depths of the caravan. What was he poking his velvet and laced arms about for? For Madame the Marquise de Lussac? No. For Madame de Croï? Still less. For Sylphide and Fidèle, the barking dogs? Not at all. Neither was it it for his family papers, his armorial plate, nor the picture of the Pierced Heart which hung in

his father's oratory. It was for none of these, though he loved them all, and would have shed his few drops of dried up blood for them, as gallantly as his ancestors shed theirs under Turenne and the Marshal Luxemburg. Monsieur dug out his treasure safe, and looked up enraptured. It was his silver cooking apparatus—his saucerpans, basting spoons, and cullenders; his little chest of sauces, spices, and dried herbs. Without these he never journeyed a step, and with them he could rival the masterpieces of the most gifted and perfectly trained of cooks. Some of the grand old quality were philosophers, architects, astronomers, writers of pasquilles or madrigals, doctors, fiddlers, and cooks—all combined. Monsieur de Lussac was more modest and wise. He contented himself with being one thing superlatively. He was, before even his old master, the prince of cooks.

The Chevalier handed out Madame de Lussac and Madame de Croï. Each was impeded by a struggling, yelping lapdog, fastened with a silk ribbon to her girdle; and each bore on her mind a weight of bandboxes of the first importance, and was accompanied by a demoiselle de compagnie, gabbling in her turn, listening to her special shrill instructions, cracked or otherwise.

This was no time for greetings and introductions. Madame de Faye was far too well informed, and had too much respect for her own claims, to think of such a thing for a moment. "Let the ladies be shown to their chambers. We will meet at supper." After this dictum, Madame comfortably, and with piquant amusement, *inspected* the arrival undisguisedly from her window.

Jacqueline was inexperienced. She wanted to do something,—to go up with shy but open arms to everybody. She rashly ventured down to her father, standing uncovered in the great doorway, beneath the stone carving of the three falcons and the two savages, prepared to receive, embrace, and bow over the hands of his guests, and to assure them of his thousand welcomes. She hovered behind Monsieur de Faye, and saw the excitement of the principal actors in the scene ; and, in the distance, the villagers of Faye, the children, and the goats, on the qui vive for what had waxed into a rare event in their annals.

Madame de Croï spared a moment to notice Jacqueline : “Is this your young cousin?” she asked of the Chevalier, who had hardly snatched an opportunity to kiss his little mistress’s hand. “My young friend, I shall be enchanted to make your acquaintance,” pronounced Madame de Croï, graciously, as she at last passed across the terrace on the arm of Achille.

Very innocent, kind words apparently ; but they jarred on Jacqueline’s quick ear, and did not please her. Why should she be addressed as a young friend by a woman not above two years her senior? Why should Madame de Croï speak of *her* making the acquaintance which ought, by right, to be a transaction between the two—unless the fact of her having been married conferred an advantage on her side, which she did not hesitate to claim? Madame de Croï was in this position ; and it was because Jacqueline had come on the carpet in transition times, and was tinged with republicanism, that

she did not yield gracefully and like a rational creature. Jacqueline did not understand it. She only knew that she did not like Madame de Croî's looking at her and speaking of her in a sweet way, as from high to low. And she did not believe Achille liked it either, because, marvellous to relate, though he was the Chevalier, "genteel, always genteel," he was flurried as he spoke to her, and inquired for Madame the Baronne her mother.

Jacqueline was not wiser than the rest of the world who walk in darkness. She did not guess, when she came down imprudently and ingenuously into the stir of the alighting on the terrace that August day, that she was hurrying to meet her fate ; she did not recognise that the young lady in the travelling cloak and the gipsy hat was her mortal enemy ; nor feel her skin rise like the skin of a turkey ; nor mutter gibberish about stars and destiny, picked up from Mesmer and Cagliostro, as did Achille de Faye when he encountered Sylvain the butcher. She did nothing except conceive an instantaneous, violent prejudice against the person who had spoiled her meeting with her kinsman.

Madame de Lussac had not leisure even to look at Jacqueline, she was so engrossed with her dog, her caged birds, and her aggravated and aggravating demoiselle de compagnie.

Jacqueline accorded her decided preference to Monsieur the Marquis, who was triumphant in having made an accurate inventory of his saucepans, and in his quick apprehension of her identity. " Mademoiselle your

daughter, De Faye? Ah! I knew such a narcisse could only be the child of you and Madame. My child, will you permit an old man whom your freshness makes young again to pay you his devoirs?"

Jacqueline was glad when the party retired for rest and refreshment to what was the œil-de-bœuf of Faye, feeling, half-sorrowfully, half-pettishly, that the eagerly expected event had grievously disappointed her; and that the reception of the distinguished strangers had fallen flat with the first flourish of trumpets.

In consideration of the requirements of the travellers, who had dined on the road, Madame the Chatelaine de Faye received at four o'clock that day; and the supper, as Monsieur de Lussac ascertained delicately, but without question, was arranged for seven o'clock. By five the circle in Madame's luxurious room was complete—that punctilious, refined French circle, in which there could be no tête-à-tête;—where a leader (generally a woman), or a succession of leaders, conducted the conversation, and the men stood deferentially behind the high-backed chairs, as at an opera, treating skilfully the topics the women touched lightly; and where each introduced his or her witticism in turn, as opportunity offered, so that there was no monopoly, and the ball of conversation was kept up with exceeding dexterity and grace. A circle arbitrary and artificial; apt to be affected and insipid; and sometimes desperately roué and wicked under the surface. But the conversation was wonderfully polished, and on occasions dazzlingly brilliant, although not without an unacknowledged shade of mystery and

expectation, which, like the Rembrandt duskiness, was replete with romance.

See there Madame the Baronne—a picture in herself, and thoroughly herself, neither more nor less. The robed, rouged, plumed woman, with the singularly mobile, high, aristocratic features, and the graceful arms and hands, told her anecdotes, announced her whims, betrayed her foibles, and manifested a combination of art and nature so rare and complete, that no mortal could tell where the one began and the other ended.

The Marquise was not equal to her friend; she was a washed-out, streaky copy of her. She fondly embraced her dearest, best Madame de Faye, like one school-girl encountering another at the end of a week's parting; and she inquired with the utmost warmth for the black and white curly darling Nerina, requiring a funeral oration on the darling's departed mother Tristaine. She expressed a little detached, spasmodic interest in common friends, muttering a blank "Heaven!" or two over this Comte and that Prince, and the miserable wreck of the country from which she and her family were escaping for their lives. In both instances she huddled her sentences together in evident panic, to which she dared not give breath or speech, but was forced to bury it in her own bosom, where the poor woman had a chance of dying of it. And then she languished on her fauteuil in a state of exhaustion. Madame de Faye, at the climax of their friendship, said of Madame de Lussac, with sovereign contempt, that the Marquise had only possessed the weakest crumb of ideas at the best, and since

she fell into agonies of poltroonery the crumb had been privately soaked in a wretched pickle of tears, so that there was but a half-dissolved morsel of her left.

Monsieur de Lussac existed principally in connection with meals ; but there could not be a huger mistake than to suppose him, in consequence, a nobody. On the contrary, wherever he went he became the presiding genius of the kitchen, where, asking and receiving full power, he installed himself in the admiring confidence of the chief of the department. He entered so completely, heart and soul, into business—threw himself so disinterestedly and generously into the choicest, most recherché achievements for the entertainment of the château or hôtel in which he was guest, that, like his less endowed Marquise, he emerged from his field of enterprise in a collapsed condition, sat with half-closed eyes or slumbered outright till the moment of trial, when the fillet à la Du Barry or the salade à la volaille rewarded his great qualifications, and covered him with glory. Then the Marquis was at his culminating point,—then he not only carved and sent round a dish as a finished artiste would dispense it, but he rendered it historical, æsthetical, poetical, religious : “Does the dish please you, Madame? I am ravished to hear it—a bagatelle, quite simple. The kernel of the affair had its birth at a Lent supper of the great Cardinal’s. But let us await the soufflet,—also a virginal dish, with a still more splendid origin. This soufflet aux dattes was brought from Egypt by no meaner personages than Saint Louis and Marguerite of Provence.”

A spectator, above all a convive, could easily discover that the withered, bright-eyed old nobleman had lived at a time when dainty eating and famine were two of the institutions of France, and when supper was one of the things to live for. He was not malicious or tyrannical ; rather, like most unrivalled men of science, he was good-natured and affable. That he was likewise perfectly careless of all outside his own range was an unlucky, not a remarkable, abuse of his powers. Monsieur de Lussac would really have preferred the whole universe to profit by his côtelettes and crêmes. Since that was impossible, he believed sincerely that men might as well perish of inanition, as swallow garlic soup with a taste of artichokes.

At the present hour Monsieur the Marquis, though receiving a temporary stimulus from the prospect of assisting at the supper at the Tour, was sunk in courteous but all-pervading sadness : "I have never seen a finer year for truffles. Mushrooms will be magnificent. Yet I go away, I quit France. And they tell me, in savage England mushrooms are either served with their rude bifteck or treated as poison. What a country ! What morals ! What manners ! With us the Gauls knew better."

The responsibility and the credit of sustaining the conversation in a manner becoming the country and the age, fell, after Madame de Faye, on Madame de Croï. The Chevalier was certainly out of sorts, and only by fits and starts did he do himself justice. He wore the white uniform of his regiment, which, in the persons of *the private soldiers*, had gone over to the Republic, or,

in the persons of the officers, was advancing under the Austrian and Prussian standards to the heights of Argonne. Perhaps the uniform suggested chequered thoughts of the past. Perhaps it was the tight white coat which lent to his handsome face and figure a furtive sallowness and leanness.

But Petronille de Croï atoned for all deficiencies; she was, beyond comparison, the most striking person present, after Madame de Faye. She was a handsome, beautiful, witty young woman of the world, in whom only the finest judgment could detect flaw or failure. She was not overwhelmed by adversity. She had more than mere education—she had that inheritance of spontaneous equanimity which belongs both to vigorous and to nicely balanced minds.

Beside Petronille, Jacqueline was but a charming child. There is a vast amount of outward difference, easy of comprehension in France, between the young unmarried girl and the woman, equally young, who has been at the head of an establishment, and is mistress of herself and her actions. Jacqueline, in her white gown tucked up out of everybody's way, her little blue neckerchief à la Marie Antoinette, and her brown hair in negligence on her shoulders, appeared more youthful than she really was. Madame de Croï, at eighteen, affected, justifiably as custom went, quite a different style of dress, one much nearer that of the Baronne and the Marquise, but still in keeping with her years, and calculated to enhance her remarkable order of beauty.

Fashions had not yet taken the bound to short waists,

Arab turbans, and the scant drapery of the Greek statues. The oriental and the classic devotions are to be attributed to the Directory and the first years of the Consulship, when even sane Directors received the little corporal with the grey redingote, in the extraordinary costume, for Frenchmen, of bare legs and Roman togas. About the same time—oh ! poor volatile nation, heroically theatrical the one day, meretriciously stage-struck the next,—Frenchwomen glided and attitudinized in the shawl dance, under what was no better than the houri guidance of Emma Lady Hamilton.

Fashion was still stately and decorous, although pompous ; and Madame de Croï gave in her adherence to the old mode, which modern authorities have declared remains unsurpassed in splendour and dignity. It consisted, in her case, of a complete suit of lilac brocade frosted with silver, and included hair-powder, which bestowed on the hair a tint “subdued and ashy.” With regard to which a competent writer assures us eloquently : “ This manner of moderating the harshness of the tone of the hair lent to the face much softness and to the eyes extraordinary splendour. The forehead, entirely uncovered, lost itself in the pale shades of the hair, and appeared broader and purer. Every woman had a noble air.” This appearance of nobleness—a broad, regal forehead, and flashing, melting eyes—constituted the distinctive beauty of Madame de Croï ; and, to crown it, in place of Jacqueline’s daisy freshness of complexion, she had a creamy, satin skin—to which she *did not contribute a grain of rouge or a fly of a patch,*

and which looked too delicate for the rough wind to blow upon. Very refined and peerlessly noble looked the face of Petronille de Croï; and not supine or apathetic, but lit up with the charm of her spirituelle conversation.

The talk was of books, the French comedy, the old Court, with details from the capital. There was a little said of political giants and demagogues, but less of that than of anything else—the subject being slippery and uncertain, with unhappy tendencies. In all its branches Madame de Croï proved herself mistress of the tree of knowledge. She had read the philosophers, or abridgments of them, from D'Alembert and Diderot to Voltaire and Saint Simon, and had her superficial but crystal-clear echo of their conclusions. She had listened to the reasoning of the ecclesiastics. She had seen the pasteboard kings and queens as well as the real ones; and could criticise keenly the meaning of a gesture or the effect of a tone. She had known eyewitnesses to the story of the Diamond Necklace—"every tassel a man's fortune."

"Of course the Queen was innocent," pronounced Petronille, in her light sarcastic manner; "and Rohan was imprisoned, and La Motte scourged. But—what will you?—it was all the same to the Queen's reputation—there was so much likelihood in the tale."

Alas! poor, susceptible, lavish Marie Antoinette—it was such light verdicts, exaggerated and darkened elsewhere with a malignant foulness that had no limits,

which stained past redemption her royal fame—per-adventure honest as any peasant's.

Petronille had received La Fayette when the blue colour of the National Guard filled Paris streets like one sea. "But then there were the red facings," she said, "which frightened away all the fishes. I believe Blondinet, as they called the gallant general, before jests were exploded at the Tuileries, mounted the ultramarine because of his complexion."

She had been present at the Feast of Pikes, the "I swear it!" in the Champ de Mars, and had assisted in the proceedings which went on busily for weeks, when barrows of earth were incessantly wheeled to and from the Altar of the Country and the Amphitheatre of the People, by statesmen, soldiers, priests, young girls of rank in zephyr muslin and tricolour scarfs, amidst the "Vivats!" of the delirious multitude. "A demoiselle trips against a mound," recounted Petronille; "at the instant an avocat starts forward to raise her; but no, she draws back disdainfully. Her father makes her a rapid sign, she extends her hand with grace to a workman in a filthy carmagnole; 'You are my true brother to-day,' she says, divinely. My friends, what applause!"

After long seclusion in privation and danger, it was a treat to the Faye set to listen to so accomplished a speaker. But in conversational power there was as great a difference between Jacqueline de Faye's and Petronille de Croi's minds as that between their bodies. Jacqueline's intuitions were from the heart; Petronille's from the head. Jacqueline's heart bled from the woes

of both King and beggar ; and when she laughed, it was with them, not at them,—a sister's laugh. Petronille's head noted all mortal errors and inconsistencies, and mocked at their coarseness, their smallness, with an intense, unsparing, unrelenting ridicule. Thus nothing could surpass the few bold, subtle touches,—always within the conventional bounds of her sex and rank,—by which Petronille could convey unfortunate Monsieur Capet's stolidity, upright Baily's vacillation, this worthy bourgeois's low ambition, and that pious ex-nun's prudish coquetry. Indeed, as the world goes, Petronille's talent was formed for appreciation.

Such were the individual characters and opinions, not conspicuously, but covertly met and opposed to each other in Madame de Faye's apartment. And just as talent is confident and dominating, and genius shrinking and self-depreciatory, so Jacqueline de Faye, on her trial in her mother's room this August evening, collapsed into seeming insignificance before Petronille de Croï. And yet she was the same Jacqueline who had been so splendid, yon June day, in the hamlet and the ravine. It was her turn then ; it was the tide at the full in her affairs. Now the tide was on the ebb, and ebbing fast ; while Petronille flashed and sparkled, and perfumed the little society with her penetration, her tact, her varied graphicness, for ever running into irony. Jacqueline might be a narcisse as Monsieur the Marquis had said. But it was a poor, tiny, spring narcisse, drooping and dwindling on its stalk, in the heat ; while Petronille was the summer rose, whose erect cup was constantly ex-

panding, showing daintier tints, and diffusing sweeter odours. The more Petronille shone and sang (figuratively), the more Jacqueline put her finger in her mouth and hung her head on one side (figuratively).

It was not black envy which was chilling and blighting Jacqueline ; it was not the thought, “ How poor a creature I am in comparison with Petronille de Croï ! How much I would give to look, to speak like her ! How Monsieur and Madame, my parents, would be proud of me, how Achille would adore me, then ! ” Perhaps she did feel all this, although she had an innate conviction, in the depth of her soul, that she was superior to Petronille, even that the sounding-line of her sympathy went fathoms deeper into human nature than the steel needle of Petronille’s sarcasm, and that her gauge brought up gold while Petronille’s found nothing anywhere save dross.

It was the Gothic fever-fit of jealousy that was scorching Jacqueline’s proud, sensitive heart, tormenting and sickening it, shrivelling it before its time, humbling it in the dust. And that large young heart was still fast bound in the swaddling-clothes of French girlhood, and could not rise and assert the dignity of its womanhood, and defy all else. It was stunned and stricken for the moment ; but its hour of vengeance would come—vengeance on itself, and rebellion against the world.

For the wind had changed, the positions were altered ; and “ I am no more for Jacqueline, I am for Petronille,” was written unblushingly on the Chevalier’s forehead. He was a little sorry for Jacqueline ; the poor little girl *certainly* loved him ; but, pass ! that would soon go.

He measured Jacqueline by himself. Flow on, pleasure! flow on, caprice! He was a little volatile, he confessed it; but his Madame de Croï pleased him, and would steady him. He had been a little of a rover; but to be a lady-killer had only been reckoned a feather in his cap, rendering him all the more captivating.

No; the Chevalier was not the one man in a thousand who prefers what is nearer heaven to what is more potent on earth—"the eternal child" in Jacqueline to the worldly wisdom in Petronille. But had the question been simply that of marriage, and had a union been practicable between the cousins, Achille would have been true to his antecedents: he would not have hesitated to fulfil the family contract, and wed his kinswoman, the future Dame de Faye, though all he had of heart had been enslaved in the service of Petronille de Croï. He might even, with the shrewd calculation of his race, have decided complacently, at the very height of his passion, that Petronille would be the better mistress of his soul, Jacqueline the better wife of his hearth. Love in marriage was exacting and troublesome, while friendship was the very foundation on which to build the family structure. He might have gone on to arrange matters so well that he should spend his mornings with Petronille, and his evenings with Jacqueline; just as Madame de Recamier must have early receptions for Chateaubriand, because the good Viscount dutifully devotes his evenings to Madame de Chateaubriand.

The Revolution had begun by complicating instead of

simplifying the relations of social life,—complicating them by their very simplification. This was apparent at the Tour when the party assembled first. The want of a necessity for a demure veil of obligation thrown over the feelings,—the rare power of transferring homage directly and openly to its object,—in short, of being frankly fickle (the Chevalier did not call it false), was felt for a time, like the burden of wealth and leisure to a man who does not know what to do with them. The Chevalier was well instructed, but the necessity of honesty in love-making puzzled him; he was not familiar with honesty in that quarter. At the same time he was versatile and high-spirited; he accommodated himself to circumstances, and made use of his freedom as soon as most men. The shade of embarrassment and chagrin which had clung to him in the opening hours was rapidly dissipated. His vehement admiration of his brilliant travelling companion—his devotion for her advancing with giant strides—was candidly manifested, and his privileged inconstancy rendered not impolitely, but audaciously conspicuous.

Everything implied that this transfer of homage had to do with the air of mystery which, from the beginning, pervaded the group, and spiced it with the genuine French flavour. Previously initiated eyes exchanged glances of intelligence. Eyes till recently in the dark, which did not deign to look daggers, or even to testify cool disapproval at the immediate consequences of what they acknowledged to be a forfeited bond, received the *illumination*, and did not conceal that they received it

as their owners trifled with elegant snuff-boxes, and took pinches of snuff. The peasant Babette alone of the spectators darted furious glances at the heartlessness and shamelessness of the deed, a judgment in accordance with her different code of morals.

Jacqueline was eclipsed, slighted, and cast aside for a rival ; and she read the truth in cruel, crushing letters. She was not a fool, though she was something of a genius. She could use her eyes, and believe their testimony ; and to a French girl of rank, however young and inexperienced, the catastrophe was not altogether extraordinary. Of course the dissolution of the family contract of marriage was a strange accident ; but not so Achille's short memory and the successful seductions of a rival. Jacqueline had been simple enough, in her novitiate and republicanism, not to weigh the advantages of Madame de Croi. But whenever these advantages were brought face to face with her, she recognized, with a heart grown heavy as lead, that they must win the day. Achille de Faye had need to be more than Frenchman to resist them. And Jacqueline had become aware, the moment the spell was broken, that Achille was no more than a vain, volatile, brave Frenchman in misfortune. It is in an ordinary Frenchman and Frenchwoman's nature to care for effect, even to trifling pieces of finery. Rousseau confessed to preferring a plainer woman with a prettier ribbon, and Montaigne to priding himself on the pearls and gold brocade of the objects of his grand passions. And in a standard modern author, a Marquise is made to defend herself for her weakness in for-

getting that a comedian was not a man, even after a glimpse of his ordinary sordid squalor had exposed it to her, and for having her cold heart afire for him during half a lifetime, because she last parted from him in the white satin trunk hose and cherry knots of Don Juan in "The Soothsayer of the Village." There are great natures exceptions to this vanity, as there were exceptions to the fantastic dramatic impulse which gave a ghastly, theatrical air to so many scenes in the Revolution ; but Jacqueline was not entitled to count on an exception. A choking resignation and despair, like the waters of death, welled up and flowed over her as she crept behind the folds of the velvet curtain and hid there. Achille was lost to her just when she had learnt to set her heart on him. And there was no help for it : Madame de Croï dressed so well, was so handsome and elegant, knew so much that Achille knew, and could display so well her repertoire. Jacqueline was a poor, rustic gentlewoman, awkward, ignorant, stupid, well nigh imbecile. She thought the ringing tongues, the musical laughter, and the proud, gay faces of the pair, amidst all the distress of the world without, would drive her mad, unless she put her fingers in her ears, and shut her eyes hard, to keep the sound and the sight out. Achille was lost to her ; and what was left to her at her sixteen years ? There were no convents now for her to take refuge in, to turn her back on the world and her face to God. She would only be an incumbrance and an anxiety to Monsieur and Madame. She wished she were dead in her *early youth.*

If readers had seen Jacqueline in her lurking-place as she revolved these miserable, dreary, evil thoughts, they would have started at a face such as they may have come upon occasionally in portrait galleries, and perhaps once or twice in actual life—a face to impress them at the time, and still more to haunt them afterwards ; a distraught young face, with eyes preternaturally large, and waxing larger and larger under the gazer's look.

There was one person, and only one, present who formed a more correct estimate than her circle of the conflicting claims of Jacqueline and Petronille. It was not Babette ; for although she loved her young mistress dearly, and ground her strong white teeth at this issue, she too regarded Madame de Croï as by far the finer woman—very nearly as fine as the lady in the caravan from Alsace. Was it wonderful that the judge who decided in Jacqueline's favour—not out of partiality, but in good faith—was Madame de Faye ? Monsieur the Baron might have his doubts, bewildered and dazzled as men are liable to be ; Madame had none.

“What does the woman fear for?” she began her reflections deliberately, apostrophising Madame de Lussac. “Her own paltry spark of a life? It does not merit the trouble of being blown out, any more than that of her reader, Mademoiselle Troche. They will soon go out of themselves, poor women, if the people will only have patience. She might have more to think of. What! a daughter born a Lussac, by marriage a Croï, and with a taint that is cousin-german to vulgarity ! Nevertheless it is so. My Jacqueline is an awkward

unformed child, who may be anything yet. The worst is, she will believe in the whole world and embroil herself with it, like a saint in the middle ages. But in that there is not a shade of vulgarity. Petronille de Croï is like a financier's daughter: she seeks to shine, she struggles to rule. Ah! how low that is! She is a liar, in look and act, in assuming the tournure and costume of the old régime. We others governed because we could not help it. We ruled without effort or design. We scorned to conceal our worst sins. We were grand dames to the last. For you, my Chevalier, I can follow your game. Petronille de Croï's dot will maintain you in exile now that Jacqueline de Faye's domain is destined beyond remedy to confiscation. Good Petronille's heart is also favourable to you, for you will prove a better chevalier than the Marquis to conduct her to England, and thus prevent hazard and ennui. She may marry you. Ah! well, I forgive you, my cousin. Every man must have care for himself, and the very chapter of the Knights of Malta is dissolved. I forgive you for everything but being actually light-headed for this Petronille's smile and favour. Chut! I hear the creaking of the joints of the young woman's mind. But men have thick heads and dull brains. They cannot always tell the pewter from the silver, or see that peacocks are not birds of paradise. They have a shade of vulgarity themselves. We are otherwise."

Madame de Faye's acute intellect and perfect taste had detected the blemish in the idol, as well as the *double end* in the attraction. She reigned by sheer

majesty, with an airy aimlessness, and was transparent as crystal. Madame de Croï was imperious in her affability, intriguing in her fascinations, Janus-faced in her good nature. She patronized and caressed Jacqueline from time to time as "my young friend," "my darling," "my rosebud"—combating skilfully Jacqueline's hasty, harsh, reckless answers. She professed to investigate Jacqueline's accomplishments, and craved to hear her play "All along the River" on the harpsichord, and sing "He is always the same;" and to see her paintings on velvet, and her bouquets of artificial flowers. She made Jacqueline prodigal offers of copies of "I have seen Dorinde, she smiles on me," and of whole yards of tinted velvet from her boxes, as if for the sole purpose of eliciting from the Chevalier—intoxicated with passion—extravagant compliments on her universal attainments and her generous temper. Finally, Madame de Croï rallied Jacqueline playfully, and uttered exclamations of wonder and delight at the poor girl's shyness and crossness, vowing it was celestially modest and natural; until the victim was stung to the last atom of endurance, and every word quivered in her heart like so many goads. And when Petronille interrupted the Chevalier, as he besought her, at parting for the night, to deign to remember him in her dreams, by turning wilfully to Jacqueline and insisting on embracing her, and assuring her in her voluble, honied accents, "I would love better to dream of you, my droll, my angel"—Jacqueline could have returned the kiss with a blow.

Jacqueline's first experience of grand society ended in

sharp, prostrating pain, and bitter, unqualified mortification. But she was wrong when she turned away from Babette that night, twisted her long curls into a rope, and sobbed herself to sleep, thinking that she could never know greater anguish. Alas! poor Jacqueline is not alone in her dream that a girl's sentimental heart-ache can match a woman's soul's misery. And before the next day had well dawned she would have given her world to return to this night's sorrow, rage, and shame,—would have thought herself fortunate could she have put away the new experience which was causing her young blood to turn to gall, her brain to reel, her heart to rise in fierce revolt against man and God, and be again merely the slighted, forsaken girl.

But Jacqueline's friends did not all take snuff, and contemplate the course of events with grand imper-turbability. Early next morning, before any one was astir at the Tour, ere the white mist hanging over the landscape was dispersed by the sun, Babette, in her turkey-red gown, and white cap, beneath which the black eyes showed like jet, was abroad and hurrying to the auberge. She would have gone to early mass for a blessing and luck, but the priest who was to replace Monsieur was not to arrive for a day or two. And she did not mind a magpie on the branch of a walnut tree, for she was in too earnest a mood to be turned back by trifles. Even at that hour a woman was filling her pitcher at the fountain; while a few goats and a *cow or two*, under the charge of a boy whistling and

peeling a wand, were drinking at the trough. Babette nodded shortly, but neither diverged to the right nor to the left.

She walked with nostrils distended and arms crossed, muttering, "That monster of a fine lady! That snake and tiger of a Chevalier! Monsieur and Madame would look on, and see my Mademoiselle sacrificed and eaten, poor little partridge!—if it were done according to the mode. What will Michel Sart say—he to whom she is the Will-o'-the-wisp?" Babette's voice fell lower, and her straight brows gloomed and contracted, till, forming three single lines, they touched her hair on the one side and her eyelids on the other. "Babette has not sown all her wild oats yet, or she would not know so well what Mademoiselle Jacqueline must feel to be left—Bah! Yet the little Mademoiselle would bite her tongue out of her head before she complained. She also is noble. Only she fled from me last night, and she moaned as I undressed her, 'It is my head, my good Babette; there is such an ache there; the company has been too much for me,' just as if the ache were not in her heart, and as if this fine abominable Madame de Croï and that Chevalier were not her executioners. And Babette too is an honest girl, with a pretty little dowry saved from the earnings of her industry. The monkey, Citizen Pepin, would take her even without these few golden louis, though his superior, Michel Sart, has no mind for a good wife that would lay down her superb airs for a carpet under his feet. Superior! Ouf! We are all equals, or what good is it to women that there

is citizenship in France, tell me, then? Not a rag. I hate it, the citizenship," stamping her foot as she walked, "I do not care who hears me ; I can keep my head, I. King Pharamond and serfdom again would please me. But the play is not played out yet. La Sarte is a wise woman, pure and pious as a religieuse. All the saints in heaven are very inconsiderate and ungrateful if they do not listen to her prayers; for I am sure she does their worship credit,—infinitely more credit than the kite Agathe, who is all stuck over with the ugly feathers of selfishness and hypocrisy. Perhaps La Sarte will give me some advice, some word to say that will pierce the thick skin of the pig of a Chevalier, or cause the soft cheek of the proud, splendid cat, Madame, to blush. If Mademoiselle would only hold herself up and look them in the face, and answer them! She can chatter of books and nature, and the universe full of the same universal sufferers—men and women and little children,—and then her cheeks are like the roses, and her eyes like the stars, and she is Michel Sart's Will-o'-the-wisp. She has some charm, truly, my poor Mademoiselle; she is innocent as a dove and generous as a princess, and I, her servant, adore her, and could die for her, and do everything but one for her. La Sarte may know some harmless spell to wile that dragon of a Chevalier back to his duty. Oh ! he will be punished sublimely if he wander away after that dame. She is a woman of the world. She can love him sufficiently just now, above all because he is another's; but she will love herself the best, and the last,

and she will compel him to serve her,—the service will be his, not hers. Excellently, ravishingly, will he be paid in his own coin, even though she treat him to no worse trick. La Sarte may pray to some of the saints—to St. Marthe, or St. Agnès, or my St. Barbe; they will care more for a love-story, and feel more for a slighted woman, than the men, like St. Audache or St. Sulpice, if they are good for anything—the holy saints forgive me the injury of the thought;—they will take care that the grand lady appear as hideous as the foibles and vices she makes so light of. They will take care that my Mademoiselle, who is like the good dear saints and loves them, look as beautiful as themselves, and recall the base heart of the man to comprehend and value her beauty, and rush back to her, and abide by her and wed her, as becomes the Chevalier and the Demoiselle de Faye—behold!” With which happy conclusion Babette arrived at the auberge.

As Babette had expected, though it was not six o'clock, Maître Michel had eaten his fricassée of kidneys, his fruit and cheese, had drunk his wine, and was gone about the business of the day. La Sarte was washing up the breakfast dishes and the solid silver spoons, in the gallery overlooking the courtyard, with the sunny mist curling off from the cheerful scene below,—at that moment astir with farm animals and servants setting out to the fields—La Sarte on her stage above the whole, as if her natural refinement had given her the pre-eminence.

Babette received a friendly welcome, and was asked to read a letter which the rural post had dropped that

very morning at the auberge. The letter was from La Sarte's little son, her darling son, who had caressed her most and vexed her most, as well as made her most proud ; over whom, therefore, her heart hovered perpetually, in mingled faith and fear. It was a short, but satisfactory letter, without any sign of the 10th of August, having been written ten days before. Letters took long then to reach the provinces :—

“Mamma,” the peasant-born deputy wrote to his mother, “your son is commissary of one of the sections. He would like to embrace you on his appointment, but he cannot, so he writes instead. How are you, our good Michel, and all the people of Faye ? Happy as angels, I hope. Salutation and fraternity—— No, these words are not for you : friendship and love to Faye. Were my namesakes the jonquilles as fragrant this spring as formerly ? I had dreams of their fragrance, and of wearing one in my button-hole. Did you remember to put one on the altar of my Lady every day of the season, as once on a time you put your own kicking, screaming little diable of a Jonquille ? I am sure you did. And do you still look at the moon, mamma, at vespers, as we said we would look ? I am very busy, but I do not often forget. Only, corbleu ! the moon is ill to find in the narrow, dark, filthy streets of Paris. Nothing but lamps here, mamma ; and very villainous lamps sometimes. I saw Ambrose the other day. He is still a journeyman baker. But these are good days for the workmen of Paris,—for none better, except for the orators. Ambrose *is a Monsieur* with silver buckles, and would cause the

boys of Faye to die with envy. Until we meet again, mamma, writes your devoted son, JONQUILLE SART."

When Babette had paid her tribute of admiration to Jonquille's penmanship, his style, his promotion, and, what struck her less, his loving remembrance of his mother, La Sarte restored the letter to her ample pocket, and, looking into her visitor's face with her velvet eyes, which were altogether distinct from Babette's, suggested: "But what will you, Babette?" and repeated the inquiry, "Does it go quite well with you at the Tour?" seeking a reason for Babette's morning call and the unexpressed trouble in the restless movements of the village belle.

Then, in a flow of the mouth, it all came out: what company had come to the Tour? how it was a family affair, how Mademoiselle's business was going topsy-turvy. Could not La Sarte, the wise woman, recommend some prescription to restore the Chevalier to his senses? Had she no nuts of King Philibert, no stones of St. Denis?

"My bue, no: I am not a sorceress," objected La Sarte, gravely; "but whether the Chevalier be brought back to his right mind or no, the good God takes care of all."

"Ah! there it was. Babette sprang up, her stout figure quivering with anxiety and excitement. Would La Sarte pray to the saints, and promise them a pilgrimage, or anything in reason, if they would interfere and preserve to little Mademoiselle her rights, and break the chain which that cruel Madame de Croï was weaving; and re-establish peace and happiness at the Tour?"

La Sarte, standing clear-faced and resolute in the morning sunshine, shook her head : "I love Mademoiselle ; but because I love her, I would not ask these things for her,—I would not if I were you, Babette. I did not ask the stewardship for Michel, or the deputyship for Jonquille. These are motes, at best, in the broad, pure light of heaven ; and, alas ! they are often snares and pitfalls. They may be good if the Lord send them of His will ; but if we seek them with our whole heart and soul, pray prayers and vow vows for them, and weary Him with our importunity, they turn to dust and ashes, and beget worms, and toads, and vipers in our grasp. So is a man's love for a woman. Does it come freely from God and himself, with his parents' consent ? —it is her crown and her blessing. Does it come from her own stratagems and labours ? —it is her cross and her curse. As for peace at the Tour—is there peace in France or peace on earth, my girl ? Let peace too alight like a dove, or like a dove depart."

"My faith, then, La Sarte," protested Babette, sullenly, where is the use of being so good ?"

"Hold ! Where is the use of Heaven, you wicked child ?" exclaimed La Sarte, indignantly. "Where is the use of blessedness, which comes by the pains of the holy Son of Mary first, and by our baptism into work and sorrow afterwards ? Is it that you think we would ever ask Heaven, if we could have earth—till we were so surfeited with good things that we could not stir hand or foot, or lift an eye, like so many mules ? For the rest, *you are young, Babette,*" La Sarte relented, "and I love

you because you are the daughter of Alix, who was confirmed with me, span and danced in the rondes with me, was my friend and my confidante, and helped to dress me as a bride. And I,—I helped to dress Alix not only for the nuptials, but for the bier ! Ah ! she got far before me, at the last. Also I love you, my dear, because you love your mistress. A faithful heart ! But leave her alone, good and clever Babette ; trust her to Heaven, as I say to our Michel. If Heaven does not see her fit for the Chevalier, or the Chevalier fit for her, in this stormy weather,—why, the saints will provide her with another husband, or keep her as safely without a husband, my dear Babette. The good God's love can make up a million times for the want of man's, as I hope you will find for yourself if you have need, little roguish Alix's sainted daughter, Widow Alix's brave daughter. What a brave girl it is!" finished La Sarte, contemplating Babette's broad shoulders in the same admiring mood with which she was in the habit of regarding her big son Michel's stalwart proportions.

Thus Babette was forced to swallow a wholesome draught of resignation and heavenly-mindedness, which came home to her more fully than La Sarte intended. No more chance of the branch of four-leaved trefoil to be inserted by stealth into the bouquet of jessamine in Mademoiselle Jacqueline's bodice ; or the tiny image of St. Benedict, to be sewed surreptitiously beneath the great flap of the Chevalier's under waistcoat. And Babette could have managed both performances so neatly ! Livery servants, like liveries, were abolished ;

so that she would have had no fellow-servant to cajole and bribe.

Babette found that she could not do much for her mistress's interests, or her own. But one little thing she did. She made a détour on her way back just to carry home a cup of water from the holy spring of Faye ; and she contrived to place the draught before the Chevalier,—drunken, but not with wine,—as he sat next Madame de Croï. Babette waited on them at dinner, from which Jacqueline had begged to be excused, on the plea of attendance on her mother, who always dined in her chamber. But poor Babette ! the Chevalier only glanced into the glass, and pointing to the reflection it contained, said with passion : “I drink to your image here, Madame, though it is imperfect.”

“Do you hope to perfect it, Monsieur ?”

Babette was so infuriated that with singular awkwardness for a French servant, she struck against the glass in removing a dish, and spilt a great part of the water on the Chevalier's breast. If that unsound region could not be cured of its infidelity and folly, it should at least have one little bath to cool it.

“Sacré, Babette ! cannot you keep the water to yourself ?” cried the young man, shaking out his cambric, his dog's ears, and his very queue.

“Good ! Monsieur !” answered Babette, stiffly and sourly, like a spoiled servant, whom the times still further exempted from ceremony. “But I have no self-love ; and though I serve, I am thankful I have not a beak and claws.”

CHAPTER V.

THE CHANGE OF BRIDES—JACQUELINE AT BAY—TAKES SANCTUARY.



HE Lussacs were to rest three days at Faye. On the second day Jacqueline was summoned to her father's room to have an interview with him. A solemn proceeding, calculated to impress her beforehand.

Monsieur's room was as unlike as possible to Madame's. It was sombre and austere; its walls were bare, except for heavy old bookcases and books; its chairs were covered with black leather. The traces of costliness were in its surgical instruments, chemical apparatus, and specimens illustrative of natural history. The last did not increase the cheerfulness of the room, for the traces of moths and the signs of decay were visible in the stuffed crocodile whose gaping jaws guarded the door, in the hook-beaked eagle on its perch by the window, and in the mysterious roc's egg hanging from the ceiling.

When Jacqueline entered, she found to her astonishment, the whole three gentlemen of the party assembled. Monsieur sat in his chair at his bureau, supported on the right hand by the Marquis, and on the left by the Chevalier.

Jacqueline paused on the threshold, and the gentlemen saluted her. She recovered herself in a moment, saluted them in return, and passed up the room to her father with something of the grace and ease which had characterized her entrance into the auberge on the night of La Sarte's fête. Her woman's heart was beginning to burst its swaddling-bands, to flutter, to beat—to bid her put her hand on her breast and hide the wound there, to hold up her head, and smile, and die hiding it—now that she was among people who, although they were of her own grade, did not understand her, any more than did the peasant circle at Faye, and might misjudge her like them.

Monsieur took her two little hands and drew her down to a stool beside him. For a second or two the blood flushed over her face, and then receded, leaving her white as a very narcisse, and in seeming danger of swooning. In the brief interval the thought struck her that the new light of the last day had been an *ignis fatuus*, a bad dream,—that Achille was about to return to her, rather than he had never left her. But Achille did not look at her; his head was bent, as he traced patterns on the floor with the sword he still wore; and the first words Monsieur spoke dispelled the illusion for ever.

"My daughter, you must know that the family arrangement for your marriage with our cousin the Chevalier is overthrown by the national misfortunes. The Chevalier now contemplates an alliance with the daughter of my friend Monsieur de Lussac. I have *answered to* it that you have no objection," said Mon-

sieur, speaking in a matter-of-fact tone, and looking at her pointedly.

"None, my father," answered Jacqueline, in perfectly audible tones,—a scarlet flush settling on her cheek as she looked Achille full in the face with her clear, bright eyes. "My cousin, permit me to wish you and your charming future wife all happiness."

The Chevalier started and winced. Was his vanity hurt at the obliging docility with which the little girl who had adored him, resigned his name and protection? Or had he a misgiving that he was making a greater sacrifice than he had conceived? He had never seen Jacqueline so beautiful, so dignified; she would be a noble woman one day, with a more winning nobleness, if that could be, than Petronille de Croï. "I told you how much I mourned our miserable misfortunes, my cousin Jacqueline," he stammered, half rising from his seat, "but I could not save myself—" He stopped abruptly, and sank down again. That was a dubious admission to make before his future father-in-law; but a glance at the Marquis showed him he was in right honourable hands. De Lussac considered the conversation quite a family affair, at which circumstances forced him to be present, but from which his unexceptionable breeding caused him to hold himself as much aloof as was consistent with the need of his presence. He was leaning back in his chair, his eyes fixed on the roc's egg, humming a saraband, and mentally marshalling the coming collation. "What could I, a poor emigrant, do?" implored the Chevalier.

Jacqueline made no reply ; there could be none from her to such a question. But the girl's intuitions were ripening as plants under tropical skies,—were darting like lightning across the faults of her education, the inexperience of her youth ; and flashing the truth vividly upon her. She had always recoiled from marriages of suitability ; they shocked her now. She found out, with bitter quickness of comprehension, "there were emigrants and emigrants," in the significant French phrase. Emigrants in rags, giving up all, and hoping all from the goodness of God and the justice of their cause ; and emigrants who carried their luxuries and vices with them, would not relinquish them, sold themselves for them—mingled cynics and sybarites. These last were the noblesse, who in their exile learned nothing and forgot nothing. But Jacqueline ignored all this new light —was done with Achille and his weaknesses and sins.

"I wrote that I should always remain your friend, Jacqueline. Suffer that I be your friend," begged Achille, no longer boldly, but humbly, earnestly.

"My little one," her father explained, "the Chevalier our kinsman is ready to show you his friendship by a great act of regard. My old friends the Lussacs are ready to show you their friendship. They importune me to test their fidelity and kindness ; and Madame and I consent."

"What is it, papa ?" cried Jacqueline, looking up intently in the noble, sardonic, but suave face, and beginning to lose her colour again and to pant like a hunted creature.

"They lead you away with them to safety and prosperity."

"Go away from you and Madame, my father ! Leave you in destitution, perhaps in danger and death !" cried Jacqueline, with a sharp, indignant cry.

"Softly ! It is because we are surrounded by such terrors that we send you away, my little heart. Do you think they would be wholesome for a marmot like you ?" declared Monsieur, with a flickering smile.

"But you are cruel, cruel!"

"Silence ! my little girl," her father warned her. "What training will Monsieur de Lussac imagine has been given at Faye ?"

"Jacqueline," pleaded Achille, rising now and standing manly and resolute before her, "I vow to you that I will deal with you as a very dear and sacred trust—Petronille will not be dearer. I will guard your happiness and honour with my life."

"I thank you, Monsieur ; I do not doubt it," answered Jacqueline, with the calmness of despair ; "but I see no necessity for this quitting of my parents. If I must go, why do you and Madame not come also, my father ?"

"Jacqueline, don't be foolish, my poor girl. It is impossible. I could not get a passport. The Marquis's protection would not stretch to me ; it will be well if it can shelter those it is intended to cover."

Jacqueline suddenly flung herself at Monsieur's feet, clasping his knees and bathing them with a torrent of tears : "Permit me to stay and die with you."

Her father raised her silently ; he had no answer to her demand.

Jacqueline's sobs were checked, her tears frozen at their source : "But why must I depart ?"

"Go, my daughter," said her father, sternly, putting her from him with an air of displeasure, yet not unmixed with patience and tenderness ; "you are undutiful ; you try me ; you ask reasons," was spoken reproachfully by the philosopher. "This is not a place for a Demoiselle de Faye. It is not meet that the future Dame de Faye should become the object of vile schemes and machinations. If the domain be not confiscated, or if it be ever restored from confiscation, it may be preserved to a noble family by your being beyond reach and in shelter. Do you comprehend and still hesitate, Jacqueline ? The Chevalier is the next heir ; he is also your nearest kinsman. Need I say that I have the fullest dependence on the faith and the loyalty of the Chevalier ?" ended Monsieur, with a generous confidence which, after what had passed, would have been incredible in any but a Frenchman.

Achille responded in a low, moved voice : "Your confidence will not be in vain, Monsieur my cousin."

And with these words he pledged himself solemnly to be a faithful guardian to his young cousin,—his former plighted wife, his love of a week, a day.

Without doubt,—so far as sentimentally sighing his regrets to Jacqueline when Petronille would be arrogant and perverse ; so far as borrowing Jacqueline's money, *if she ever had money to lend*, and gambling furiously

with it, in the intention of retrieving his losses at play, and repaying it a thousand-fold,—so far as these went Achille would keep his word.

The Marquis came to life, or returned from the visionary land of pâtés and moyennenses, to add his argument to Monsieur's determination, and show his cordial concurrence in the plan. “ My charming young lady, make a virtue of misfortune. Honour us with your society ; we will do all we can to render ourselves worthy of the grace. Madame the Marquise, and my daughter Petronille, will be a mother and a sister to you. For me and the Chevalier, we will be your very humble servants. Monsieur your father and Madame your mother will be content. Times may change in a crac. The princes, and you, and me, and the others,—we may be back at the Tour by Christmas, bringing with us roast beef, and pudding, and porter, my beautiful, and being up to the eyes in it,” shrugging his shoulders with great emphasis. “ But have no fear,” he finished, with a little note of encouragement, as if he had a doubt that he might have horrified Mademoiselle by too plain raillyery, “ I shall not suffer you to starve in that rough wilderness, if the exertions of one man—a cook who has been crowned with some poor laurels—can prevent it.”

Every one who knew the Marquis was aware what an amount of esprit de corps and what prospects of exquisite eating and drinking on the other side of the Channel lay in that speech.

“ It is enough, my little one. We will it. Go to

your mother." And thus Monsieur dismissed both the subject and his daughter.

Jacqueline stood before her mother like a pillar of salt—so mutely protesting, so bitter at heart.

Madame received her with nothing but congratulations, and regrets, which were the next thing to congratulations. " You are going, my Jacqueline, where you cannot even send me the news and the fashions ; but it is as well, for you would 'have made a mess of them, giddy one. Since your marriage with the Cheyalier has gone off, it is quite time to make another alliance for you. And who is there to marry here, unless goats and snipes, bourgeois farmers-general and peasant officers ? There are not even 'the little ends of men' who remain to be killed in Paris—not even a convent for a girl to retire to. My faith ! how the world is changed ! They say it is better in England ; that Westminster and Kensington are not so far amiss. And Madame de Croï has letters to my Lady Holland and my Lady Jersey. As for the Marquise, when she is no longer in terror for her sheep's head, she will sit in her dressing-gowns and two nightcaps and be in terror for the ague, and whimper over the fine climate of France, and the fine days that are gone. But Madame de Croï—I solicit her pardon, she will then be Madame de Faye, your near kinswoman,—she will take you out and furnish you with a desirable match. The Lussacs, if they do not find England agreeable, propose to cross to Belgium and the country of the Rhine, where our princes and people are. *There you will be at home, my dormouse, my woodlark.*"

"My mother," urged Jacqueline, with trembling white lips, kneeling on the stool at her mother's feet, as she had knelt at her father's, "I cannot go with the Lussacs."

"Why not, my daughter?" inquired Madame, in simple surprise.

"Because I was to have been the wife of Achille de Faye," fell word by word from Jacqueline's cold lips.

"What has that to do with it?" inquired Madame, in pure amazement. "He is to be the husband of another woman. The first marriage agreed upon could not be; so it is very correctly cancelled and forgotten."

"I cannot forget, my mother."

"Forget what, little one? You were not his wife, and no pure-minded demoiselle, no honest girl of the people, cherishes a particular inclination and devotion for a man, until she is his wife and the Church has blessed their union," declared Madame, dogmatically.

"Then I have not been pure-minded. Oh! forgive me, forgive me!"

Madame drew back scandalized; but though she was affronted, she was not enraged. It was very rarely that she thought it worth while to be in a passion. When she did so, she was sublime. She sat curiously inspecting her shrinking, writhing daughter. "It was not the way in my day," she said at last, haughtily. "We women thought more of ourselves; and I cannot approve of such a confession; it is indelicate, immoral, violent, revolutionary. Ah! this Revolution, what has it not to answer for?"

"I have only made it to you, mamma," murmured Jacqueline, terribly abashed. "He does not know it; at least, I never said it to him. I would die before he should know it."

"Quite right, so far as it goes; but still I do not understand. When I was young," continued Madame, speaking as of something she had heard with the hearing of her ears, "I read of what was romantic and absurd in the romances of Mademoiselle Scudery. She was ugly, that Mademoiselle (though she was pure blood), ugly as a child of the pavement, a gooseherd; and her lover, Pélisson, he was ugly as his spider,—no wonder he made a pet of it! Even Madame de Maintenon, the last of the pedants, though she charmed the great King in his dotage, was a duenna, an instructress. Of their set Madame de Sévigné only was graceful or beautiful. I have heard that the great Mademoiselle was not much; but she was the granddaughter of Henry, and that was enough. I forget what I wanted to say; it was this: Mademoiselle de Scudery says of this love (as says Durfe in his *Astrea*, and the silly old romance of Gerard de Roussillon tells the same story), that it will sacrifice all for the good of the object, and rejoice in the deed. It will destroy itself, and die singing, like the swan, to promote the happiness of another. Gerard loves a princess; ah! well, he resigns her that she may become the wife of Charles Martel—queen and empress—and he the lowliest of her subjects. Petronille de Croï is not a princess, she is not even a *grand dame* without a ruse, an embarrassment; but she

can maintain this poor boy in exile, and he can protect her, and assist her to pass the time. It is a good market. And he is caught with her as St. Lambert with Madame de Chatelet; he knows no better. But what would you, Jacqueline? that he should starve? that he should die nameless and unknown in a regiment of volunteers? for he has neither money, nor power to get him a company. Still, I do not comprehend;" and Madame tapped her snuff-box.

It was true Madame had given a definition of love as it was recognized in France; but either the high platonism was overstrained and did not answer to the passionate human heart, or Jacqueline's love was not the perfection of the passion, but was a rank growth, having as much to do with youthful imaginativeness and sensitiveness as with self-denial and martyrdom. Jacqueline's suddenly-blown love for her cousin Achille was very real, however; and the step to which she was being driven was maddening.

"I do not wish that he may not marry Petronille de Croï, Madame; I cannot prevent it, and I would not if I could. I hope they may be happy," asserted Jacqueline with a swelling of her white throat. "But I could not dwell with them, see them every day, be the second where I was to have been the first—their pensioner, their pupil. It would make me wicked, mad, my mother," and Jacqueline shivered till her teeth chattered.

"My poor child," declared Madame, promptly and firmly, "you are mad already; that is, your head is

a little touched. You have fever, cold, megrim. You will retire to your chamber ; you will have soup for the sick ; you will say your prayers. To-morrow you will be better, though feeble ; be in your senses, obedient, amiable, my little kitten. All these fancies will be gone ; all this talk is but a fancy. I see it now. At last I comprehend. There will be no more of it. You must command your body ; it is the forte of us, the nobles. For Monsieur and I, we will it, my daughter. We know what is good for your honour and your happiness. You go, with the last remnant of our class to safety and society, in dull, prosperous England."

Jacqueline threw up the selfish protest ; but she continued to cling to her mother's knees, as she had clung to her father's : "Leave you, my mother, my father, never !" she cried, as she had cried to Monsieur, hoping to strike an answering chord in their breasts, and not seeing that their sentiments of parental duty and their affection for their child were her worst enemies, were what clenched her fate. "What will you do without me, mamma ? You will be so sad without your child."

But Madame would not own to weakness, to anything so bourgeois as family attachment. "Not at all, if I am satisfied on your account. It is the law of society and of nature. After all, Nature is more accommodating than people think. She is belied, that poor woman. The young go, the old remain. Agathe suffices for my toilette, and I shall not miss you, my lamb. You are even a poor unpicker, my Jacqueline ; you could not

earn your bread in that way. I have known dames, who staked a hundred louis on one card, very glad to earn a few thousand francs a week as unpickers. Besides, the threads get more entangled now, and the gold looks red, as if the lace had been in battle. It has been in the wars many a time ; I have detected here the black smoke of the cannon, and there a rent and a crimson stain. I have said to myself, ‘This was done at Verdun ; and that at Fort-du-Quesne ; and here again a brave soul went out.’ But to offer the poor thread for sale now, when one pretends to forget all but frieze coats, would be to have all our clothes dabbed crimson together, and all our hairs shorn by the mob razor of France.”

“Let me die with you, my mother,” moaned Jacqueline.

“Not when I command you to live for me, my child,” negated Madame, with her stately tone of divine right. “Go, and send Babette, and I shall instruct her how to put up your boxes. That the Demoiselle de Faye should have no more decent trousseau, that is my grief, my little one.”

Jacqueline went anew with feet that did not feel the parquetted floor, and brain that swam.

Madame looked after her only child and drew a little sigh. “Poor little one, she would always believe everything and everybody,—herself amongst the rest ; and she was so inquisitive, she would not be kept in the dark, as girls should be. That sympathy,—it is a dangerous commodity. I feel myself deranged with listening to her delirium. But how ? She must submit ; it is for us

the quality, to submit. The Queen would be at Versailles now, and not in the Temple, if she had submitted to the exigencies of her rank. It is for me to provide Jacqueline with an example." Madame gave another little sigh, and her glance strayed to the recess where were her aids to devotion, but where, Monsieur the Curé not being to her mind, she could not be devout according to rule.

The next person Jacqueline met—and it was by chance—was Madame de Croï, whom she encountered on the grand staircase. Jacqueline's beautiful, triumphant rival stopped and hailed her with enthusiasm: "My rosebud, my stepdaughter, is it not? Ah, we will not quarrel, Jacqueline! You do not think I care because you were destined for Achille? My dear, these things are done in the cradle; and if I had a daughter I should settle her fate then, and trust that no revolution would come to unsettle it. But it will be my endeavour to find you a brilliant fortune—a bridegroom without reproach, such a one as you merit. You do not think me too young to be your chaperone? Hold! if Monsieur de Croï had possessed a daughter, say, would she not have been much older—fit to be my mother, very likely? Well, I should have been very amiable to her if she had allowed me." Petronille pinched Jacqueline's cheek meaningfully, and passed on.

Jacqueline went her way, sick at the perfumed, flattering words, and not caring much whether the promise would be fulfilled. Undoubtedly Petronille would not *beat or starve her, or lock her up.* She would even

exert herself for the promotion of Achille's cousin, unless Achille's cousin threatened to eclipse her,—an absurd supposition. She might tickle her, delicately poke her, and laugh at her, as she had done ever since the two came together. She might try to get Jacqueline's heart into her skilful hands, to dissect and galvanize it, anatomy of all kinds being much in fashion. She might, like the eruption of a flower-draped volcano, burst out on her with a torrent of fierce, bad words, when she was in one of her furies. All at once, some fine day, after seven years' acquaintance and fondling, she might play the traitor with a smile on her lips, to serve a friend, or injure an enemy, or only punish a slight offence. But eruptions do not happen frequently even in volcanic countries ; and no clever woman will betray her neighbour except as a rare indulgence. Jacqueline might therefore live long and never know those traits in Petronille's character.

Jacqueline thought little of that particular danger. Her difficulty was how to live out the next two days, which had shone so sunnily in anticipation ; how to live the after life, the strange, mocking, dreary farce which seemed to stretch into an eternity beyond. She could scarcely tell how she spent the first of the days. By tacit consent she was left to herself. Monsieur and Madame did not dream of anything so heinous in their daughter as obstinate resistance to their sovereign will. Therefore, in their good manners, in their softer relentings, they did not persecute her with lectures and censures. Jacqueline, with due attention to the cere-

monial of society, flitted about very much as on other days, in the places which within two sunrises and sunsets (nay, within one), were to see her face no more, for many a dark, troubled, and awful week and month. She was chained to her stake at meals and at the evening receptions ; for it was not lawful that she should absent herself from the circle of noble ladies and gentlemen, or go out of sight and hearing of the sparkling, ardent wooing of the Chevalier, and the occasional courteous and gentle words he remembered to speak to his old love : " We will have fine weather for our journey, my beautiful cousin ; " or, " Shall I write on Nerina's collar, ' I am Nerina, the dog of Citoyenne Jacqueline Faye, of the party of Citoyen Lussac ? ' " Worse still, she had to bear the condescending railly and the ostentatious kisses of Petronille de Croï. No wonder that she was wild ; the wonder was that she was not mad outright, as Madame had alleged in her defence.

At other hours she wandered up and down. She took counsel of all the familiar faces and scenes, but all caused her to beat her breast and hang her head in deeper despair. Paul screwed up a more vinegar face than ever at the little Mademoiselle's loss of a husband ; her departure but added to his rheumatism. Agathe, who had never been fond of young girls in the Tour, fell into more foldings of the hands and Credos, as if to insinuate that the being hunted from the Tour was a judgment on Jacqueline's transgressions, and on all the sins in which she had giddily and presumptuously abetted the insolent *Babette*. And *Babette* was the worst of the three.

Actually she seemed to have gone crazed. She was incessantly pulling out the drawers in Mademoiselle's room, and pushing them in again; snatching up robes, jupons, and hoods, and flinging them away; abasing herself, as if she could grovel and kiss Jacqueline's feet; holding out her arms, and beseeching her Mademoiselle to fling herself into them, rest her weary young head, and cry her poor heavy eyes to sleep on her Babette's fond bosom. Babette's rich brown complexion had grown in these few days to a dun chalk colour, with patches of purple about the cheek-bones. Her lace cap was pushed to the extreme crown of her head, the crushed lappets swung round, and hung down her back. Her work caused her to sweat and groan almost like Agathe.

Meantime the preparations for the journey went on. Already Jacqueline's great chest was half filled. It was studded with brass nails, and had been at the wars with Monsieur, when he was a grey musketeer. It had seen Minden, perhaps Rosbach, and later service still, for it was not altogether free from the mould and clay it had contracted in the garden, where it had been buried with the spare plate, and only dug up that its contents might deck the buffet and table in honour of the Lussacs, and because it would be useful to Mademoiselle.

Not a single idea of resistance to the cruel command did Babette put into Jacqueline's head; not a hint did she give, in all her spasms and convulsions, to dissuade her young mistress from her unnatural destination. Jacqueline found no refuge with Babette; so, after gaining

at her with piteous eyes till Babette went into hysterics, she instinctively withdrew from her humble friend, and acknowledged, mournfully, that she, too, had failed her in her tribulation.

Up and down paced the restless feet, the wet eyes looking wistfully at the tapestry on the dingy mouldering walls. It represented Agamemnon and Iphigenia. Would that her father had been another Agamemnon, and had bound and laid her on a sacrificial altar, instead of bidding her be gay, travel the world with Achille de Faye and Petronille de Croï, and witness all their confidence and caresses, after she had seen the ceremony solemnized which would unite the two—one of whom had been her hero, her lover, her promised husband. French couples, let the bond be never so slight or formal, have always their polite confidences, their stereotyped caresses.

Jacqueline questioned the pictures of those who had gone before her and borne their crosses, with her strained, weary eyes. They told her the same tale; they all looked at her just as did the picture of her mother. The proud, spirituelle woman was represented as a wood nymph in spotted leopard skin and buskins! with an alabaster bow in her hand, and a crescent on her lofty unruffled brow. That picture indicated Madame truly. Jacqueline could look back and remember old friends of the family—Messieurs in riding-coats and cloth canons and curious wigs, whom Madame called “my shepherds,” and who constantly addressed her as “*my quite beautiful*,” “*my all graceful*,” “*my queen of*

queens." But to none of these high-flown, antiquated adorers, any more than to Monsieur, had Madame unlocked the secret chambers of her spirit and submitted as to a conqueror. Her mother's eyes, from that picture, scorned Jacqueline for her want of intrepidity and magnanimity, her anguished self-questioning, her frantic child's wailings. Before no figure there could Jacqueline throw herself and ask commiseration—except before the carved figure on His cross of Him who died for a world's sins, and endured a world's woes. Even here the girl was beaten back and found no rest; for here, beyond every place in the world, the horror of great wickedness assailed her. The impulse to hate Petro-nille; ay, even to hate Achille, while she loved him too with a fierce love,—that impulse, which her scared conscience, her womanly modesty, her whole nature standing up and fighting against it to the death, told her might lead her to crime and remorse, was most repugnant and horrible here, as it seized her, threw her down, and tore her. It was in some respects a lying spirit; for had Jacqueline trodden that path of most artificial yet most deadly peril, none dare say that she might not have trodden it safely. But her faith did not compass the power and the love of Heaven; and there rose up before her, in the vivid colours in which Dante painted his hell, Monsieur Hubert's sermon at the churchyard gate, and his warning of the lost women, to whom might be joined tens of thousands more from the mighty, the noble, and the wise.

Where should she seek refuge? At intervals the

storm in which she was struggling became so appalling, that it seemed as if, in its very force, it was relenting and undoing its work. It seemed as if it would stupify and deaden every nerve and feeling, and make her from that moment an automaton, a cold, white, careless girl, who would henceforth mind nothing, regret nothing, decline nothing, but eat, drink, laugh, and die without any more pain or trouble. These moments were when Jacqueline was in the hall, or in Madame's room, or promenading the terrace, and planting orange trees to celebrate the visit, with the rest of the party. It was in one of these moments, when there was a singing in her ears which prevented her hearing in memory the now hushed song of the nightingale, or in fact Achille and Petronille's vows, and when her heart was beating with a dull, sullen sound, as if it were a hammer striking an anvil, muffled, to make melancholy music, that Jacqueline committed the great blunder of her young life, the blunder which, like the additional straw that broke the camel's back, delivered her over for the time to frenzy and madness.

She was conscious of her father's watching her with scrutinizing eyes. She believed, in her distraction, that he was studying her passive grief and humiliation, as she had known him practise surgical operations on animals, and diseased or dead men and women—not to relieve human misery, like Monsieur the Curé, but to acquaint himself with the mortal frame, and to pry into life's mechanism, just as he had investigated the elements of *matter, or interrogated philosophy and religion with the*

idle, never-satisfied, and for-ever-doubting question of Pilate, "What is truth?"

This morbid, aimless curiosity was one of the evil symptoms of France at the time. It neither regarded reverence, charity, nor tenderness, but invaded the holiest sanctuaries, and treated their altars as common and unclean. It frittered away the heart of man by depriving him of the old heroic capability to cut the Gordian knot of existence with the sword of duty, to carve out for himself a man's honest work and reward, and have done with this ball of earth after he had played a man's part on it, leaving the rest to God, if he were so happy as to believe in God.

But Jacqueline was never guilty of a sadder mistake than when, with the wayward, diseased ingenuity of misery, she misinterpreted Monsieur's notice of her. He was merely saying to himself, "Poor little one, better that your heart should be broken,—young hearts mend again,—than that you should fall into the hands of these demons, be polluted, my virgin, or pour out your sweet blood like water." And the infatuated child thought Monsieur was taking stock of her woe, making trade of it, softly pulling it about with pincers, employing their sacred relationship to increase his familiarity with that strange animal man, in the idiosyncrasy of his own daughter, as ancient artists perfected their arts by observing the agonies of slaves.

Her mind, unhinged by this last ghastly misconception, Jacqueline, in a rash moment, shaped her future destiny to its distorting light. She slept as all young

creatures slept, that they may rise and buckle on their loads and become perfect through suffering. But she woke so early that not even her maid on the truckle bed in the ante-room was stirring. Babette's preparations for slumber had certainly been peculiar. She had tilted the mattress so that the place for the heels was higher than that for the head; she had flung out the pillows, and where they should have been there was a crushed bandbox, with the débris of working materials—whalebone, buttons, clasps, even needles and pins, with stalks and stones of fruit, and crumbs of bread from her pockets, all strewn over the uneasy couch, so that she appeared rather to be doing penance than seeking repose. But she was young too, and was exhausted by her exertions of the preceding day. So there she lay, her strong arms above her head grasping the ragged edges of the bandbox, her mouth wide open, and breathing stertorously.

Jacqueline had another long day to suffer, and then the dreadful to-morrow. It might have been thought that she would have cowered down, covered her head, and shut out the light in her wretchedness. On the contrary, she got up at once, and proceeded to dress herself quickly, not so much like a victim distraught, as like a person mastered by a tyrant resolution. She did not call Babette, she scarcely looked at her as she went noiselessly out. Something, she did not stop to consider what, had cooled her heart to her maid, notwithstanding her distress of the preceding day. Was it that Jacqueline *did not believe* it genuine? that in the new suspici-

ousness aroused within her, she thought Babette had been suborned, gagged, induced to hang back from her, and let her go? Or was misery already rendering her callous?

Jacqueline did not tarry even at Madame's door. She quitted the tourelle and the Tour while the whole house was buried in sleep, and the shadow on the sun-dial was so short, that it was but a black speck. She traversed the terrace, and going round to the back of the Tour, let herself out by a wicket gate into the bocage, close behind the gentilhommière.

In the dense dew of the August morning twig and blade were dripping wet. The solitude was complete, except for Jacqueline's little lion dog Nerina, which had detected the light sound of her footstep, risen up from her wicker cradle, and trotted after her. Half republican as Jacqueline was, she had never gone out into the bocage, or roamed beyond the terrace, without Babette, any more than the Demoiselles de St. Cyr had walked abroad unattended. But now she was neither frightened for Red Riding-hood's wolf, nor for the diabolical Monsieur, of whom that perfidiously cruel animal was the fit emblem, as the glittering-eyed old French nurses stoutly maintained.

Nerina, unaccustomed to the silence, which was not even broken by the songs of birds, and having her mane draggled, and her fine curls made thin, lank, and disconsolate as candle-wicks,—Nerina, trained to be as particular about her curls as a dandy about his wig, and spoiled into peevishness, began to howl her discom-

fiture and disgust. Being a French dog she howled, where an English dog would have whined.

Jacqueline lifted the pampered favourite, wiped her feet mechanically, and carried her a hundred yards into the wood ; then, standing still, she prepared to put the dog down again, but first she unclasped the collar which Achille had amused himself the previous evening by furnishing with an inscription,—“I am Nerina, the dog of Citoyenne Jacqueline Faye. I belong to the party of Citizen Lussac, bound with a viséed passport to Calvados, thence to England.” Jacqueline cast the collar intemperately into a thicket of broom ; then looked into Nerina’s silly eyes, gave her a long, light hug, as if she represented other than herself, and set her softly down on the moss and leaves. The dog, finding herself once more exposed to damp and dirt, howled twice or thrice dismally ; then, taking into her own hands her rescue from the unbecoming circumstances, she turned tail and scampered home. A dog of quality could not follow Jacqueline in the way that she was going.

Hares ran across her path, owls hooted from the hollow trunks of the decayed trees, but she held on along the footpath into which the wide road through the Ravine of Plums had diminished. She was not retarded, like Nerina, by the water which the clumps of eglantine, honeysuckle, privet, box, and tall walnut and chestnut trees, shook down upon her in drenching showers. Soon her clothes were clinging to her limbs, while her streaming *curls* were straight as Nerina’s, and glistened with

countless drops, better representing heavy tears than sparkling diamonds.

But she had reached her destination—a clearing in the wood, where a few days before she had seen Michel Sart marking some of the gigantic beeches, the pride of the old De FAYES, now sentenced to the woodman's axe. Here her fitful mind conjured up a great contrast:—the Chevalier walking beside her jauntily, courting her triflingly, touching her lightly, as a thing which belonged to him, to take or to leave at pleasure ; and Michel Sart, with his leonine face all moved as she entered his mother's auberge ; his bashful lips pressed like a devotee's to her chain ; his reverential walk with her to the conciergerie, as her champion and defendant, not dreaming of being her equal.

If there was a human being in the world who could ever do anything for her it was Michel Sart. If there was a human being who would risk everything for her, it must still be this same Michel Sart.

She dropped down on the root of a tree in the chill, shady place which the sun had not yet penetrated and lighted up ; where the lizards were still below the stones, and the dragon-flies in the loops of the long grass. There she sat perched like a white dove ; for, poor child ! she was all in white, as if dressed for the service of the Virgin. She had not half an hour to wait. Maître Michel's big figure came swinging along leisurely in the opposite direction. She did not give him time to discover her ; she started up, flew to him, and clasped her hands before him. Her moorland eyes had assumed the

look which such eyes are said to take when excited or angry: the sparkling pupils became detached, and seemed to strike like balls.

"Maitre Michel, save me! I have come to you. Be my deliverer. And if that is impossible, I say to you, kill me; I know you will put me out of pain gently."

He stood thunderstruck. He thought the whole scene was a phantasm, that his brain was on fire, and that he was no longer qualified for any place but a cell in a *God's-house*, in consequence of his insane passion for Monsieur's daughter. Even after he had recovered himself, and could believe his eyes, Jacqueline, draggled and dishevelled as she was, was not simply Mademoiselle to him, but an angel.

Michel Sart had heard something of Jacqueline's immediate departure with the Lussacs, and putting that and her betrothal to the Chevalier together, he had settled (though a rumour had also reached him that the family alliance was to be relinquished) that the marriage in which he was so much interested would be celebrated speedily, probably as soon as the travellers had reached a secure spot,—in some foreign ambassador's chapel, or by an emigrant priest in a private house. And this conviction was a death-blow to any selfishness in his worship.

But as it happened, he had not apprehended the true bearings of the case, for, notwithstanding all, here was Mademoiselle come to him in the deepest sorrow.

Only one thing was clear, and it was soothing and

thrilling beyond description to the true, long-suffering heart : Mademoiselle came to him, she asked him to help her. "What is it, my Mademoiselle ? But compose yourself ; trust me. What ails you, my young lady ? Saints ! how wet you are ! You will get your death of cold. Come back to the Tour ; let Babette make a crackling fire instantly."

"No, Michel, never ! I will never go back unless you can save me. I say to you, Michel, kill me with one blow, but do not send me back." And then she told her story, sobbing and wringing her hands, and supporting herself on her servant's arm : how Monsieur and Madame were sending her away ; how she did not care whom the Chevalier married, but she could not dwell with him and Madame de Croï ; how nobody felt for her ; and how even some, who ought to have cared for her, philosophised, and entertained themselves with her sufferings.

Michel Sart wiped his forehead as he sustained her tenderly. "Have patience, my Mademoiselle. Perhaps you deceive yourself. It is to me incredible. Madman ! robber ! villain !" It was a bewildering light that broke on Michel Sart in the hollow of the bocage, in the cool silvery blue of the morning—a terrible temptation that met him there. And it was all the more terrible that he could not tell how far the strange chances of these times made it lawful for him to protect Jacqueline from what appeared wicked injury and insult, or how far it would be possible for him to deliver her from the darkening perils of the advancing Revolution, without yielding to the temptation.

"Mademoiselle Jacqueline," he said, "I would die for you with all my heart; but my dying would do you no good. You would only feel the want of me to watch over you and wait upon you." Maître Michel hesitated, and his voice fell. He was manly and modest; he recoiled from the notion of taking advantage of her and wounding her afresh; he did not know how he could explain himself. "Mademoiselle, do you not remember that I am only the aubergiste's son and Monsieur's registrar?" he whispered, hurriedly.

"Yes, yes, Maître Michel; but I have nobody save you," wept Jacqueline, inconsiderately and incoherently, "and I thought you would do something for me."

"But do you not see there is only one way?" he panted.

"What way?" cried Jacqueline, with asperity. "O Sainte Dame! make him tell it me."

"I dare not tell it; you will lose all confidence in me; you will hate and despise me," Michel protested, vehemently.

"No; a hundred times no. I said, 'Kill me, but don't suffer me to go back and be carried away by those people there.' I will rather die here, when I am innocent, and everybody will be sorry for me, and the good God will pardon me, because I asked for death rather than that the demons should reign in my heart, and I live to be vile. Women have died in the Revolution already; women are lying in crowds in the prisons of Paris. Oh! these are times of lamentation. Whatever *it is*, *I will bless you*, Michel Sart."

"I cannot kill you, Mademoiselle; it would not be like killing myself. I do not think anything could make me kill you, unless it were to put you beyond horrible wrong and suffering," declared Michel, with desperate determination. "The angels guard you from these, though you have known that life is hard! But—see you—I could marry you,—forgive me for saying it,—and Monsieur could not send away my wife. No other interference on my part is possible."

Jacqueline stared at him blankly and confusedly. It was not at all what she had expected. Such a step was so entirely out of her calculations that the alternative had not crossed her mind. Whatever irregularities were in France, misalliances, in spite of Voltaire's Nanine, were hardly known. Very few had recourse to such solutions of the strife between Aristocrat and Republican, even when marchionesses worked as day-labourers on humane farmers' fields, and countesses cooked in soft-hearted bankers' kitchens. Where the ancient virtues of purity, fidelity, and loyalty were often looked upon as bourgeois, the conventionalities still prevailed with an iron rule; and when they were broken, the iron entered into the soul of the offender.

Jacqueline's wan face crimsoned, and then grew paler than ever. She covered her face with her hands. "What is this that I have done?" Then, with her noble forbearance and consideration for the feelings of others, she blamed herself and spared him, at the same time deciding her fate. The consideration that it was she who had compromised Michel Sart, and impelled him to

his proposal, had great influence over her in this decision. "Michel Sart," she said, extending her hand to him, "in any other circumstances it would not have been fit that you should have spoken such words, or that I should have listened to them; but I forced you to say them,—I, who am a miserable, humiliated, distracted girl. I am not worthy of you, Michel Sart, except for the rank which I have forgotten in coming here to you. I pray you to think twice before you repeat your words. One man has resigned me; I will not take another man, whoever he may be, by surprise, and induce him to sacrifice himself, to put me in shelter.—What! you would still have it so? Then, Michel Sart, take me, and hide me as your wife; it is an honourable title; I will forget that I have borne any other."

He did not thank her, he did not oppress her with his secret joy; he would still have thought it sacrilege to let her have a glimpse of it. But neither did he charge her to pause and count the cost, as she had bidden him: he felt the time for that was past; it was too late. Whatever Jacqueline forgot, neither could ever forget these words in the solitary wood. In his position of her father's retainer, he could no longer continue to shield his young lady. He had crossed the Rubicon: he must be everything to her now, or nothing.

Michel Sart, though by nature a slow man, made the necessary arrangements for executing their purpose rapidly; and he made them on this the most exciting morning in his life, with forethought and exactness. He took Jacqueline down with him through the plum ravine to the

hamlet. The late flowers of July were all withered, and the plums plucked, while the blackberries and nuts were not yet ripe. No birds sang, and no little girl sang with them,—

“If Henry should offer me his Paris,
I would not quit my dear, O gué!”

No gallant Chevalier clapped his jewelled hands, and looked with kind looks at his plighted bride. No Babette encored rapturously. But Jacqueline scarcely glanced around to miss what she had lost. When she did, it was with lack-lustre eyes.

Maître Michel was compelled to leave Jacqueline at the mouth of the ravine, as he went his way through the still quiet village street to the auberge. She, dreading detection, and shivering with more than cold, stood watching the light blue smoke from the charred-wood fires which began to curl out of the holes that served for chimneys in the cottage roofs, and listening to the hoarse bark of a dog of the people, very different from the treble yelp of Nerina. But Maître Michel was not gone many minutes, when he returned with one of those seated carts in which country people go to market, with a strong work-horse yoked between the trams.

It did occur to Jacqueline : “ Oh, I wish he had brought La Sarte, a woman like myself, a good woman. She might have told me if I avoid misery by committing an inexpiable crime. My parents chase me away. Assuredly I am but anticipating their wish in thus cutting myself off for ever from them and the Tour.” But she did not say out what was passing in her mind ; and Michel

had not spoken to La Sarte, it would have troubled him to tell why.

Ah ! as Jacqueline said, if he had only brought La Sarte. Old eyes see so much farther ; old heads, grown hoary in virtue, are in a sense like the little children, so much nearer heaven. But though Michel Sart had not brought his mother, he had brought her great red market cloak and hood to wrap and muffle Jacqueline in, and wine and bread to sustain her.

But Jacqueline's veins were already throbbing with fever and false strength, and there was danger in delay.

"I am so sorry that I have nothing better, Mademoiselle," said Maître Michel, as he lifted into the peasant's cart the girl who had only ridden in an allegorically painted, velvet lined aristocrat's coach.

"Oh ! do not think of it," Jacqueline said sincerely. "It is to me all the same,"—and so indeed it would have been, had she had to trudge along the road till she fell with fatigue, or mount a tumbril amidst the familiar attitudes and expressions of the members of her class. Only the sight of the axe, or the platoon of soldiers, or the rapid rushing river, would have aroused her with a shock and a pang. And then she might have measured the trifling vantage-places of this world by the starry heights above her ; her past life might have lain mapped out behind her, at it shows to a drowning man ; and she might have seen again with clear eyes and spoken again with a fluent tongue.

To accomplish a marriage between these two citizens, *it was necessary* that Maître Michel, ere their folly could

have a chance of being discovered, should convey Jacqueline to the next town of La Maille, and stand with her before the mayor, marriages being already ordained civil institutions. After signing the contract, it depended upon the private sentiments of the couple whether they would then have recourse to a priest, and add the Church's authority and blessing to the bond.

The Demoiselles de Faye, Jacqueline's ancestresses, had walked in a circle of nobles, over flower-strewn paths, and in sweeping brocades, to the village church or the family chapel, there, kneeling before the gold-crowned, incense-streaming altars, to take the sacramental vows from the lips of bishops and archbishops. But Jacqueline was jolting along a rough road in a peasant's cart, shrouded in an aubergiste's cloak. She was journeying in the secrecy of the dawn, to appear like a thief before a mayor, with her father's servant for her bridegroom,—and all because she could not conduct herself as if she had neither conscience, memory, nor heart, as became her rank.

Michel Sart did not intrude himself on his mistress's attention. He was a quiet man at all times, a good listener, speaking to the point what he did say, and only dealing with the heart of a matter. And his mind might now misgive him sorely; the wonderful acquisition of his treasure might well be grievously overshadowed. The mocking fiend "Too late!" while it urged him on, might even now taunt him horribly. "False servant to Monsieur," it might cry; "usurper and invader of aristocratic rights, though the Assembly has decreed all men equal; strong man profiting by a girl's weakness."

It was Jacqueline who spoke occasionally, and what she did say was as if there was nothing extraordinary in the scene and the position of the actors: merely a dry remark on the pasturage, "It has need of rain, has it not, Maître Michel?" or on the vineyards, "The National Guard must be set free to gather the grapes;" or on the low hills bordering the horizon, "Are these the Côtes de Bruyère?" as if she were speaking in a dream. And Jacqueline had not been a dozen times so far from home in her whole previous history.

The sun was shining full on the walls of the old town, on its single square and its few dependent streets, its narrow houses, with projecting upper stories, broad sprouts, and tiled roofs indented like finger-nails.

There was no stoppage at the gate, where Michel, who was well known, was hailed by the officers: "Good day, citizen, and a good market. Peste! the market is not till to-morrow; you are a day in advance, citizen!"

Inside the gate were great fortified dwellings, with coats of arms above the doors, more frowning and formidable than the Tour de Faye. Happily Jacqueline knew nobody here, but she gazed up at the great houses, her thoughts recurring to home: "They will have missed me at Faye. They will be searching up and down; Babette the wildest. They think I have been a great sinner, and that I have plunged into the Mousse at Gaspard's mill-dam. I am a great sinner, and it will be all the same to them as if I had drowned myself. But you could not help it, Maître Michel; so do not think of it," Jacqueline begged him, with the exquisitely *fantastic courtesy of her high breeding.*

Michel guided the cart to the most retired inn ; but even it had proclaimed itself an auberge of the Nation, and raised a red cap for a sign. He did not ask for a private room, because that would have subjected Jacqueline, without the armour of assurance or experience, to the curiosity, cross-questioning, and suspicion of the sharp landlady while he was absent making the necessary arrangements. But he and his companion had the best seats at the table in the porch.

There sat with them a screaming politician of course, a soldier in a grey coat, and a market-woman, with heavy gold rings on her thick brown fingers. The last glanced more stolidly than wrathfully at Jacqueline's small white hands,—her face being shaded by La Sarte's hood,—and at her soiled, crumpled white gown.

" And how goes the hemp and the flax this year over at Faye, Maitre Michel ? Oh, you were the wise man to turn farmer instead of aubergiste before the roads were blocked up : not but that the Nation is a fine thing,"—the hostess corrected herself, diplomatically,—“ and the nationalists always thirsty ; but we need all strings to our bow,—you comprehend, Maitre Michel ? The Citoyenne eats nothing,” concluded the good woman, in a little tone of offence at the slight to her soup.

“ The Citoyenne is indisposed,” Michel put her off.

“ My gossip has eaten her chickens in place of bringing them to market,” observed the market-woman, jocosely, stopping, with her mouth full of fried potatoes, to point to her own well-filled basket.

There was a laugh, for they were all in good humour, although the politician kept vociferating mechanically,

"No rents, no domains ; let brothers share acre by acre. If not, to the lamp-post, or to the new Madame Guillotine, with every mother's child of the aristocrats."

But Jacqueline trembled and quailed through her stupor. She was not yet insensible to the love of life, though she had bidden Michel Sart kill her, thinking that she preferred death to her frenzy of abasement and poignant pain. She crept close to Maitre Michel ; and, through all his gnawing care and self-reproach, it was sweet as heaven on earth to have her pressing close to him. But even while he tasted the sweetness, Michel Sart remarked a gaunt-visaged, spectacled man in the long coat of a priest, with the box of a pedlar on his back, entering the inn. He quitted Jacqueline for a minute, and interchanged one or two words with the stranger. "He will do our business, Mademoiselle," he whispered, on his return, "when we are done with Monsieur the Mayor. He is the successor of Monsieur Hubert. I guessed it. He does not care what we are, but he has asked me if there are any bookstalls in the town ; and I fancy also he is carrying a small library on his mule, and that he is his own mule when his beast feeds, lest any scholar run off with his books." Michel ran on in this light fashion, for him, glad of any refuge from his own thoughts. "Without doubt he will be very orthodox. Look up and see how he puffs under the Fathers. Will he take them into the church of St. Laure, which is now standing open, a home for mendicants, and where no curé will interfere with us? Does it please *Mademoiselle*?"

"*As you will,*" answered Jacqueline, wearily.

It was only a step from the auberge to the mairie, and Jacqueline traversed it with La Sarte's hood pulled down over her face, and clinging to Michel Sart's strong arm. The mairie was just opened, and two or three clerks were sauntering across the whitewashed room, whistling and staring. Monsieur the Mayor was not so devoted a public servant that he relished being disturbed at his omelette and pickled herring (his mother was from Alsace) to celebrate a marriage. At first he sent word that the couple must wait. But when he was told they could not wait, and was reminded that it was business hours, he appeared unceremoniously with a napkin round his neck, resolved to dispose of the affair as quickly as possible, and return to his unfinished meal.

"Monsieur the Mayor, I have the honour to ask you to celebrate a marriage between me, Michel Sart, registrar to Citizen Faye, and Citoyenne Jacqueline Faye, ci-devant Demoiselle de Faye, and to permit two of your clerks to be witnesses to the contract," said Michel, firmly.

Monsieur the Mayor stared. He had inherited more than the taste for pickled herring from his Alsatian mother. He was solid and phlegmatic for a Frenchman, and this morning there was a call for despatch in his duties. But Michel Sart, though known at the auberge and the gate, and generally in La Maille, was not known to the Mayor, who, though a republican, was an honest man, and the father of daughters.

"I do not see the face of the Citoyenne. We are not accustomed to marry cloaked and hooded brides," *objected* he, suspiciously.

A listlessness and numbness had stolen over Jacqueline's faculties in spite of her fever; but she heard enough to aid Michel when he uncloaked her. Poor little girl! what a wretched object she was in the draggled white gown, the train of which had been pulled out of the pocket-holes, had been rent and trodden upon, and now hung like a tattered banner half a yard behind her. How the clerks of the mairie shrugged their shoulders and marvelled! Still the white dress was bridal-like, and the dull trouble and panic in her face caused her to look years older.

"Do you consent, of your free, true will, Mademoiselle—— ahem!—Citoyenne? Both contracting parties must fully consent," floundered the mayor, as a precaution.

"Is it I?—I consent? It was I who made the marriage," said Jacqueline, candidly, regarding the mayor with her great eyes.

"Pardi! that is more than I bargained for. I asked if you consented, not if you originated the alliance; but it is all the same thing,—that is, if the Citizen consents, of which I presume there can be no doubt," ended the mayor, with more of a sneer than a gallant compliment.

His insinuation pointed to some villany. And taking the wild looks and the admission of the girl, in connection with the mute testimony of Michel Sart's manly, trustworthy bearing, he very likely settled that it was villany to be covered and atoned for, rather than to be begun by this ceremony. Still it was not the part of a magistrate to refuse to perform a legal rite.

A formal question and answer, and the reading of

a paper, to which Michel signed his name, plain "Michel Sart," in the big, bold characters, not of a peasant, but of a soldier, and to which Jacqueline appended her signature in the fine, aristocratic Italian hand of all the demoiselles of her generation,—"Jacqueline Bertrande de Faye,"—and the work at the mairie was done. The deed was like the letter which Jacqueline had written in her chamber to the Chevalier,—an accomplished fact. The subsequent prayers in the desecrated church of St. Laure were, so far as the law was concerned, no more than the supererogatory works of good Catholics. But thither, to make assurance doubly sure, went the infatuated pair before the learned priest of Faye. He had neither surplice nor white stole, but he recited the appointed prayers in Latin ; and though there was no holy water to sprinkle the intended husband and wife, and to cross the ring, the ring was there, and the gold and silver coins. The curé blessed the ring and the coins, and passed them on his book to Michel, who presented the money to Jacqueline (who let it drop out of her loose grasp), and, taking her passive hand, put the ring on her thumb, her forefinger, and her middle finger, in the name of the blessed Trinity, leaving it on the third finger with the final Amen,—a seal which no power less than that of the Pope of Rome could break.

The book-worm priest cared nothing for the transaction, so that his manuscripts and his brown tomes were safe ; and he pronounced the benediction with half an eye on his beloved haversack, which, for the sake of

space, he had in the form of a pedlar's pack, now leaning against a pillar.

Michel had ordered the cart to be yoked and waiting near. He led his wife to it through the boys of the pavement, and the women who sat at work on the doorsteps. Without delay he lifted her to her former seat, mounted himself, and whipped the horse homeward. It was noon, and the tell-tale breeze fluttered around and floated away from the two whose lot in life was now so strangely changed ; and who still staggered blindly and stupidly after the step they had taken, for which there remained no remedy. Civil marriages could indeed be broken as easily as contracted, by mutual consent ; but where then would be honour, integrity, virginal purity of name and fame ? And the Church's sacraments could only be unloosed by the Church.

It was yet far from sunset when Michel Sart drew up with his bride in the entrance to his mother's auberge of Faye. The villagers were mostly at work getting in the last hay crop. There had been disturbance enough all the morning at the Tour, but it had not extended, beyond a few guarded inquiries, to the hamlet. Therefore if any one saw a cloaked figure in the cart with Michel Sart, he was at liberty to suppose it was a chance countrywoman to whom he, with his usual benevolence, was giving a cast.

La Sarte, however, came out into the wide entrance at the rattle of the wheels. "Where have you been, my fine fellow, without telling me ?" cried the old woman, with vivacity ; "so that I had your dinner prepared in vain. *Heaven !* it is the Demoiselle you have brought

back. Mademoiselle, how they will rejoice themselves at the Tour ! Babette was here for a second, asking if I had seen you. ‘No,’ I said. ‘No ; but she must have strayed, and lost her way.’ Are you very tired, my poor Mademoiselle ?”

“ My old woman,” interrupted Michel, laying his hand with unconscious heaviness on his mother’s shoulder, “ I never heard you a chatterer before,—but you help me. Say you that I have brought back Mademoiselle de Faye ? No, my mother, I have brought back my wife from the mairie and the church of St. Laure at La Maille.”

“ Michel, what have you done ? Oh ! you hurt me ! ” cried his mother, writhing from underneath his heavy hand. Her fine cut face, which had been unusually bright at seeing him again after an unaccountable absence, that could yet bear no unwelcome interpretation, because it was her brave, big Michel who was concerned, grew haggard as from a deadly blow, taking all in at a word, a glance. There was brought home to her the forfeited trust, the utterly unequal, imprudent marriage, and, not least, the grievous slight, in the secrecy of the act, to her, his mother.

“ Forgive me, my mother,” entreated Michel, with a sorrowful humility and contrition in the midst of his success. “ Consider, the deed is done and cannot be undone ; and, because you are a good woman, and my true mother, spare her.”

La Sarte made a great effort : “ It is done, my son ; I say no more. I leave you to God and to the saints. May they have mercy on your frailty. I welcome my daughter. She is my daughter,—that is all now.”

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT THE CHEVALIER, MONSIEUR, MADAME, AND BABETTE
SAY OF JACQUELINE'S DEGRADATION—HOW THE WIFE OF
MAÎTRE MICHEL FARES, SEPTEMBER, 1792.

“  O the fire ! to the sword ! A hundred deaths and a hundred devils ! I will blow the fellow's brains out, one of the canaille as he is. To have had a registrar, an aubergiste's son, the cock of a village, succeed me ! And possibly, he may all along have been my rival ; for the little girl, though sweet, was always spouting republicanism. Why not that ruffian, the butcher ? That would make the thing complete. But I will settle it. I will punish the low-born dog, the sneaking scoundrel, and rescue the wretched girl ; and then—ah! well, then let her be put into a convent to hide her depraved taste. There are still convents abroad, though there are none in France.”

“ But, Monsieur the Chevalier, this is my affair,” said Monsieur de Faye coldly, with only a little yellower sallowness of complexion, and a little blueness of the lips. “ You forget that you have now no right to interfere. Madame de Croî's future should run no risk. My Chevalier, I forbid you to lift a finger in the matter ; *she was my daughter : the business is mine.*”

Achille remonstrated and resisted, but he was forced to submit. He was to turn his back on Faye the following morning ; so he would have no opportunity of counterminding Monsieur in what he persisted in regarding as his own quarrel, and which he burned to avenge. And besides, Madame de Croï occupied and consoled him. "It does not signify ; here am I," Madame's manner said significantly, while her tongue said coquettishly, "What a girl ! brutal, vulgar. I thought she was only stupid and sulky. I never heard of such an esclandre. But, Monsieur, I shall be frightened to try a De Faye now. What do I know ? It may run in the blood." And Achille, put on his mettle, was at her feet again with a thousand vows and protestations. He burned with love, while it lasted, for the coquette ; at all events he could not afford to lose the second wife promised to him : his finances would never stand that.

The Marquise looked upon the affair as being almost as horrible as the massacres, and smelt at her flacon as if to keep off the infection. At the same time she congratulated herself that it was no business of hers, but only of her high-minded, clever, amiable friend, the Baronne.

And the Marquis held that this came of neglecting the kitchen : De Faye's kitchen was in a very unsatisfactory state. On his parole, and in confidence, he would not have believed it. He could do nothing for the pretty, brutal Mademoiselle (even the affable Marquis called Jacqueline brutal) who preferred cheese of pig and raw artichokes. He rather thought a cell at Bicêtre was the place for her. But he would arrange appropriate

dishes for the other sufferers while he stayed : refined sorrel soup, as on a day of fasting ; bread with tears ; and lamb sacrificial, which would at once induce them to eat, and compliment and console them.

These were the side performers in the retribution ; it is harder to speak of the main actors.

Maitre Michel had remained at the 'auberge, fully expecting to get his dismissal as registrar, be raved at, reviled, disgraced, persecuted, as far as Monsieur's circumscribed power could reach him. But instead of this a wonderful silence followed the dire news that Jacqueline had dishonoured the family, thrown herself into the plebeian arms of Michel Sart, wedded him according to the new forms of the country, and taken up her residence at the auberge. The very gossips in the hamlet were faint and quaking. The destruction of the Bastille, the bringing in of the King and Queen to Paris, their lodgment in the Temple, was nothing to this portent at Faye. Their own young lady, so grand, and at the same time so modest, and their Michel Sart, their man of principle, who did the smallest thing conscientiously, and who was as humble as he was strong,—it was incredible. And would Monsieur not yet find a way by which the terrible wrath of a nobleman should fall headlong and relentlessly on his registrar, and all concerned ?

After a short interval Michel Sart brought himself to face Monsieur, and deliver up to him his accounts, with a list of the wages which were becoming due to the poor people. It was like walking into a lion's den, but *Michel did it*.

The great departure had taken place from the Tour, but Monsieur was still there, and had Maître Michel shown to his room in the tourelle. The old scene and the old reception. Monsieur met the servant who had become his son-in-law without rising, but with no symptom of indignation. He at once spoke of business, distinctly and sensibly, while Michel's head and heart hung fire as they never did before or after. To Michel's great surprise, almost to his greater discomfiture and consternation, he discovered after the first few words, that Monsieur neither stormed at him, turned him out of office, nor called on Paul to pinion his arms, drag him to the old guard-room, scourge, stab, or starve him there. Monsieur appeared bored and blasé, and did not banter his registrar, as he had sometimes amused himself by attempting to do. That was the only difference. He made no allusion to the advantage taken of him, the wrong he had suffered. He ignored it. But at the end of the interview he leaned forward and addressed Michel, curling his lips and displaying his teeth as he spoke : " Michel Sart, if you had been a gentilhomme, or if my rights had remained, there would have been another little account to settle between us. And if the King ever create you gentilhomme, or if the country restore the rights of the sieurs, I will not forget. One way or another I will repay. Until then, good day, Monsieur my registrar," with a wave of the hand.

Michel Sart did not protest, or plead excuses, or implore grace. He did not say, " Monsieur, I have saved your domain, and it may be I shall save your life. I will

be a loyal and devoted husband to Jacqueline. She besought my intervention, she led me into the act." None of these assertions would have suited the old feudal code ; they would but have added insult to injury. Michel had nothing left him to do but to bow and retire, and serve Monsieur still.

Madame was the last to hear the frightful scandal, the disgrace, worse than poverty, danger, or death, that had fallen on the great old family. Even Agathe feared to tell her mistress the story which concerned her so nearly. It was Monsieur who took upon himself the trying duty.

Madame said not a word even to Monsieur. She sat silent for an hour and more. A slight working of her fine features and a twitching of her hands alone proved that the daughter's evil behaviour had not killed the mother at a stroke. At last Madame began to speak, to marvel, to mourn : "What misery ! What shame ! Can I have survived it ? The foundations of society are broken up ; the world is coming to an end. Petronille de Croï's vulgarity is but a blade of grass to this forest of horror. What can it be that is at the root of the malady ? Noble blood used to vindicate itself in noble minds and manners, as well as noble faces ; it was our distinction, our privilege. And I thought the child generous ! But to make me the mother of a domestic ! Why did she not slay me with her father's sword ? Whence comes it ? I am not low, am I ? Monsieur is not low, whatever sins he may have committed. In the old régime there would have been a dungeon for the fellow in the Tour, *as well as in the Bastille* ; and there were always the con-

vents for the wretched girls who forgot their honour. But what matters it? The two are gone for ever; they will be punished enough. If my lost daughter had committed sin, it might have been forgiven her; but to be guilty of treachery to her class, to ally herself with the canaille,—she is swallowed up for ever! I do not know whether the saints will acknowledge her, and restore her to her rank in another world, if she be penitent. The etiquette of Heaven may be different. But here on earth there is no restoration."

"Mademoiselle Jacqueline was always a malicious, high-headed, foolish child," muttered Agathe; "and that unruly ostrich Babette is at the bottom of it."

Madame looked up sharply and chid her maid: "Do you speak ill of the dead, Agathe? My little daughter is dead and gone. Do you think I will suffer ill to be said of her?—I? I go to wear mourning for her, to pray for the pardon and peace of her soul." And Madame kept her word. She had out all her sables, played cards in hearse-like plumes and pall-like velvet, and went through all the appointed seasons and shades of mourning punctiliously, as for a dead and buried child. She desisted from all reference to Jacqueline in speech or occupation, unless she remembered her when she spent an additional half-hour over her book of offices where it had a mark placed at the service for the dead.

Had Michel Sart looked over his shoulder when he came out from his audience with Monsieur, he would have seen two flaming eyes glaring down upon him from a lurking-place on the terrace. They were Babette's.

"Malediction upon him! Insolent! And she, too, is insolent, and false, and low,—oh! low as the dust beneath my feet. I spurn her. A demoiselle to stoop to wed a wretched rustic of a registrar, and live as his woman with his peasant mother in a hovel of an auberge! And I believed she was so noble, I would have gone down on my knees to her, imbecile fool that I was. But why is he not to be hung? I should rejoice to see him hung, and her too, and dance the tricotée at their execution."

Thus was Jacqueline completely severed from her friends. For some weeks she saw nobody connected with them, near as she was. And then, when she did encounter Babette, she trembled with agitation,—longed to ask after the inmates of the Tour, and to fling herself on her old servant's neck, and weep out her sorrow there.

Babette walked up to her, but looked her through and through with her bold black eyes before she spoke: "I served a Demoiselle de Faye once, and none can say I did not serve her faithfully. I have no salutation to make to the wife of the registrar, who has not even got peasant flesh and blood by her change of diet. You are a poor spindle of a creature, Madame Registrar. I have no envy of your lot. Shall I tell at the Tour that Michel Sart and his mother treat you to famine and beatings?" and then she wheeled about to leave her.

Jacqueline shrank back. "And thou, Babette!" she protested, with upraised, pleading eyes.

"*Citoyenne Babette, if you please, Citoyenne Regis-*

tar," Babette corrected her, imperiously. "I should wish you to know that I will allow no liberties from a person like you. Our positions are changed, my old little mistress."

There was worse behind. The first time Jacqueline ventured to any distance from the auberge, in the opposite direction from the Tour, she was overtaken by the old coach of the FAYES, which was not out once in three months,—the coach with the tassels at each corner, the foot-board, the coloured worsted trappings, and the four work-horses, two not being able to drag it over the heavy roads. Her morbidly acute ears not only identified the rumble, but knew the coach was stopping as it approached her, that Paul might clamber stiffly down and unbar the gate of the cross-road in front.

Jacqueline dropped upon her knees on the earth and held up her hands. She could do nothing else. She saw Monsieur; she saw that he recognised her in spite of the altered costume which she then wore, and which was as far removed from what she formerly had worn as a nun's habit is from a Court gown. She remarked, with an agony of observation, the torrent of emotion that swept over the usually impassive face. She waited for a word, a curse, it might be.

"Hold!" called Monsieur; and then, in hard, haughty tones, "Woman, open that gate."

Paul, who did not know her, coming upon her unexpectedly in her change of dress, stopped in his slow process of alighting, and repeated the command roughly: "Get up, you, and say your prayers at the next laure.

Clear the way for Monsieur, and don't be such a snail about it," and he pointed the plaited thong of his whip at her. Jacqueline crept forward and bunglingly unclosed the gate. As the coach passed, Monsieur flung her a small coin.

Michel Sart found his wife leaning against the bars of the gate, the piece of money lying in the dirt beside her. He took her home, only saying softly to her, " You have me, Jacqueline." But what was Michel Sart, humble, patient friend and servant, to fill up the chasm which yawned between the mad young girl and all she had formerly reverenced and loved passionately? It was her cruel jealousy of the love of father and mother, as well as the light love of the Chevalier, which had hurled her over the precipice.

Now Jacqueline saw that she had become an outcast and an alien from her people, and that henceforth her life must belong to the auberge and the Sarts. She tried to comport herself accordingly, to accommodate herself to the fall which had been her own work; but the struggle was too difficult for her; she failed. After a while she grew weary of trying, and yielded to despondency.

The fact was, the foundations of Jacqueline's nature were broken up, and she only a child of sixteen. The lessons and warnings of Monsieur Hubert; the very principles and feelings which had taught her to loathe the heartless expediency of her departure with the Lussacs, and her residence abroad with the Chevalier and Madame de Croï, were all wildly uprooted, and

tossed to the winds. Filial obedience, in France, is so much regarded as the virtue of virtues, in girls especially, that to want it or lose it constitutes the offender a hopeless reprobate, worse than an infidel. Monsieur Hubert's teaching of humility, care for others, resistance of the levity and the worldliness of her class, fasting and mortification at fit seasons, to act as an antidote against too great self-indulgence at others,—all these precepts, as well as the whole course of her education, had to do with the condition she had quitted for ever. She was like one called suddenly from the artificial brilliance of a banqueting-room to the cold grey of the common day and the common world. The bearing of her faith on her altered circumstances, and on all ordinary wifely duty, was an enigma to her. She had a regard and respect for Maître Michel as Maître Michel, and she had married him with infinitely less scruple in one sense than an English girl would have done. It is the received idea in France that marriages are good without love; that all that is needed for the happiest marriage is esteem; that passion is an intruder, and, like other intruders, undesirable. And however hearts may have their misgivings and rebellions, this idea exerts its influence. But what had Jacqueline to do with thoughts of faith or duty so long as her crime against her parents was unatoned for and unforgiven?

Still she sought, when she had struggled back to new life, to behave as a wife chosen from another auberge, or from one of the neighbouring farms would have behaved. In this line of conduct La Sarte meant to

bear her out, by adopting towards her the hardening process of lending her no support. From the time the old woman had called Jacqueline her daughter, she, with her characteristic righteousness and disposition to austerity, treated her as her daughter-in-law, and nothing more. She rechristened her by the homely name of Jacquette, which Michel never used. She procured for her "field clothes," of La Sarte's class, and approved and applauded the young wife's wish to put them on. Michel was annoyed by this trial of the peasant's cap, corset, and petticoat, in which Jacqueline looked exactly like a noble girl returning from a masked ball at the Hôtel de Ville, very sick and sorry for her prank; and he said openly that he did not know her in them. And he expressed his satisfaction when, with the waywardness and fickleness of girlhood, she threw off the intolerable burden, and returned to her long trains and her loose, uncovered hair.

La Sarte did not object either, though in her heart she condemned; it was not her place to control her son's wife's dress, since he did not find fault with it. And so strict was La Sarte in keeping her own place, that not only did she not meddle by counselling her daughter, but she appointed Jacqueline her duties in the auberge, and when she had shown her how to fulfil them she let her alone.

Jacqueline and Michel occupied one of those little traveller's rooms opening into the wooden gallery which ran round the back of the house. Jacqueline had to *keep it* clean and in order. And as to the lighter work

of the establishment, she had the spinning of the finer flax, the darning of the finer household linen, the care of the pot-au-feu in the morning, when La Sarte was busy with the labours of the dairy. Jacqueline might forget or fail ; she might shred no vegetables in the pot, or scald the milk brown, or neglect the logs till they were ashes in the stove ; or she might let the work accumulate, and get into the direst messes. La Sarte remained immovable, though she must have seen Jacqueline's incapacity in a household such as Maître Michel's, for the young wife could not even dispense the brown bread and the piquette for the labourers' meals, while her want of a trousseau made her the poorest bride Michel could have brought to the auberge. Of a truth it would have been more to his profit to have taken home a workwoman. Ah ! well, La Sarte submitted, and was obstinate in refusing to put to her hand. She preferred to eat raw vegetables, drink burnt milk, and contemplate patiently what went to her heart—cobwebs in the cupboards, holes in the tablecloths, and general dust and disorder. La Sarte was as rigid as Monsieur and Madame in refusing to continue the obligation of Jacqueline's quality.

Had Jacqueline fallen ill La Sarte would have nursed her night and day, with a mother's tenderness ; had she confided to La Sarte her spiritual darkness and sore repentance, she would have received noble-minded, gentle-toned consolation. But, sadly enough, sympathy was missing between them where it was most required. Jacqueline, as La Sarte's bru, was altogether different

from the exalted Demoiselle whom the old aubergiste had contributed to spoil. La Sarte set herself now against Jacqueline as against a child of her own, on whom the rod should not be spared; so that Michel's mother,—Jacqueline called her by no other name for many a long day,—was an altogether different friend from the La Sarte to whom Mademoiselle had graciously presented her little chain.

Michel secretly fretted at his mother's treatment of Jacqueline, but he said nothing. And he, too, left Jacqueline to herself, even while he preserved for her his delicate worship. He loved her with as great a love as man can bear woman, but it was an undemonstrative love. Among those lively, vain, gasconading Frenchmen, there are to be found some characters as still and as constant as ever existed among the ancient Romans or Goths. And with their strength and calmness are generally combined much singleness of heart and patience; qualities which the French themselves say are more conspicuous in country than in town lovers. And with their strength and calmness are also united the most watchful attention, the most loving ingenuity, so quietly lavished, that they may never be noticed or valued till they are lost, and the object looks round in dismay to see, too late, what it was that had been the shelter and brightness of her existence, and find that it is gone from her for ever.

Such was the love of Michel Sart,—a brooding, fostering, retiring love, spending itself on another and *claiming nothing* in return. He studied Jacqueline's *wishes, regretted* that she expressed so few, and was

eager to gratify them, though it were only in sitting mute by her side, night after night, in the gallery ; or riding after the marchand colporteur when Jacqueline signified she would rather weave with bobbins than twirl a distaff, and lacked patterns for her weaving ; or standing for hours to the top of his boots in water, fishing in the Mousse after a hard day's work, because she had just tasted some of the trout from his basket the evening before.

This was the man Jacqueline overlooked, was disappointed in, and even went a little way towards scorning. Poor little girl, she was a far way from perfection, though she was generous and warm-hearted, and, like a pondering pitiful girl, had stretched out tendrils of her nature to republicanism. She was so accustomed to be served, that, it is to be feared, she got somewhat into the way of thinking that service from such as the registrar was a pleasure and honour to the servant, and there was an end to it. All that was expected of her, she thought, was transcendent grace and courtesy; and truly Michel had done his best to keep up this illusion. But still she had been conscious of something unique in Maître Michel's service, something passionate and pensive, like the song of the nightingale in the bocage, before the summer woods were sombre, or the red earth became a slough of mud and mire ; and it was this something she ceased to trace in her bourgeois husband's repressed, deferential, almost distant homage.

Indeed, there was a fault in Michel Sart's freedom from self-assertion, in his long-suffering. Either it was

too fine for mortal woman to distinguish, or it partook of the reaction of a strong man's weakness. Why should he, a noble, brave fellow, of intelligence enough, and of truth and purity infinitely raised above the sullied coats of many a nobleman, woo Jacqueline with doubt and fear, after she had entered into an unequal marriage with him to humour her rage and obtain his protection? But slaves, though they may become licentious in an hour, do not attain freedom in a day; and it was not the first lava burst of the Revolution that could place the noblest bourgeois on a level with Jacqueline de Faye.

In her heart, Jacqueline thought Michel sluggish, indifferent. The rash, impulsive girl, without a particle of the discrimination and tact which Petronille de Croï possessed to a nicety, and with only flashes of instinct and inspiration to guide her, misjudged her husband as she had misjudged her father and mother. With her partial fine lady's education, she grossly under-estimated his sagacious intellect, his thorough appreciation of country interests, his steady pursuit of the beauty which lies in use, his exact discharge of his common duties as registrar and steward, and his satisfaction in their perfect fulfilment. For although Jacqueline professed to hate philosophy, yet the brilliant fritter of idle speculation, and a thousand polished tastes and studies, with no aim and no belief at their core, had dazzled her, and impaired her vision. It was true that her brief, fanciful love for Achille de Faye had sobbed itself out in the tide into which it had plunged her, and which had borne her far away from all her old landmarks, landing her on the

shores of a new country, with rockbound coasts, savage forests, rude huts, and primitive, dull inhabitants. Still Achille de Faye, the gallant, elegant cousin, spouting poetry, describing the Comédie Française, fencing, dancing, making easy ardent love, with his long perfumed love-locks, his rank, his bearing, his beauty, and his danger, had no superior in her imagination.

Jacqueline had but one habit, as a wife, which she formed from choice, and adhered to throughout languor, oppressive dreariness, and occasional disgust. Ay, the homely things which the noble girl had taken to kindly in her happiness, and which it was in her to take to kindly again, if her troubled conscience were but at rest, excited her dislike and aversion now, when her heart was sick and broken. The habit was to sit every moment of leisure, this same September, in the gallery behind the auberge. That was a pleasant seat morning and evening, and the brown little room beyond, which was Jacqueline's and her husband's, might have been a tiny paradise to many a humble girl,—Babette, for instance, who, by the way, came no more to the auberge to call for her mother's friend La Sarte, and even looked stony and disdainful as she stamped up the hamlet street.

The brown little room, containing the straw seats, the Indian calico hung bed, the empty bowpots, was either dismally tidy and formal, or lay untouched and forlorn. When the latter was the case, Jacqueline must have forgotten it, for she was too pure-minded, however brought up and however run wild, to be a sloven. But the court below was passing pleasant in the silver mornings and

golden evenings, which broke in upon the rainy season. The well, with its high green tree and the white sand strewn round its mouth ; and the cavernous opening of Marlbrook's kennel, with Marlbrook, wolf-sized, liver-coloured, and unfurling a tail like a general's feather, his nose between his paws, or his ears cocked, barking at a beggar, or baying at the moon,—were constant features. As intermittent accessories there were horses, mules, oxen, sheep, goats, and pigs, all jingling, pattering, leaping, trotting ; and poultry, cackling, crowing, strutting, scraping. Then there were the human figures, the farm servants, with an occasional traveller of the humbler class. These were always to be seen leaning against the posts, eating great slices of bread and preserves, and talking and gesticulating at their ease ; or moving about with loads of fodder and grass on their heads and shoulders, or with baskets slung over their arms full of mottled, scarlet, russet, and oat-coloured fruit from the orchard, hard bright nuts from the walnut trees, or gushing grapes from the vineyard. Michel had nailed a trellis against the gallery, and had trained the house vine, above the reach of the farm animals. Its broad leaves were now hanging tinged with the loveliest crimson ; and mingling with them were rich bunches of grapes, cool and tempting, mellow and luscious.

Jacqueline hardly ever allowed her eye to rest on any of these home treasures, on the lowly sunshine of the place, on its sweet, gay, varied tints and tones. How could she, when her gaze was constantly fixed in the direction of the cloud-laden blue sky over the olive *thatch roof*, where, framed by the entrance to the

auberge, was that corner of the terrace, and that girouette of the Tour, which Michel had watched, and where, once a week or so, a figure would now flit across the terrace, pacing it to and fro. Then Jacqueline would half spring up, stifle a low cry, and look as if this glimpse of the past, with its bitter sweetness and cherished anguish, was worth all the rest of the world to her, the reward of many a morning and evening's vigil.

Michel Sart sat beside Jacqueline every evening, not smoking, not speaking to her often to disturb her, though she was always very civil and gentle in her listless, heedless fashion. He might have been a disregarded stone giant gazing at the evening star, which had shone on the gardeners, Adam and his wife, in Eden, long before it had shone on the Court of the Bourbons, and the feudal lords and ladies in their châteaux. He started from another point than Madame, but he wondered, as Madame wondered, if there would be equality in another world, or only the *haute noblesse* of godliness and holiness ; and also why people loved their equals best, for it had not been so with him. It appeared as if Michel was there solely to examine himself as to whether this was the happiness which he had never dared in his most sanguine moments to aspire to ; for beyond occasionally fetching and carrying Jacqueline's chair for her, and wrapping her in her cloak when the dews began to descend, he did not make his presence felt at all.

It was Michel's will that Jacqueline should not appear to any of the guests of the auberge. La Sarte, since her husband's death, had discharged the entire functions of

aubergiste with success. Still, had Jacqueline been a mere ordinary, active bru, she would have assisted her mother-in-law in receiving orders and attending to company, and would have taken pride in the task. But Michel positively forbade any approach to that. "I will not suffer it, my mother. Few strangers of rank come here now, but there might be rencontres. And rather than that such rencontres should happen, I would quit the place, and push my fortune in the world, with her on my arm. She is not a dead weight, though she is so much above us, my old woman,—a weight to work for,—ah ! well, if that were all !"

Jacqueline accompanied La Sarte to vespers and angelas. Sometimes Michel, republican though he was, went with them. Monsieur Hubert's successor, Monsieur Tilleul, officiated, as he had pronounced the wedding benediction at La Maille, with a dim attention, and but half an eye to his duties. It always seemed as if there was little in heaven or earth for him but the Fathers, and the "History of Communism," which he was writing in his solitude.

Yet, in spite of the remissness of the ecclesiastic, Jacqueline would shed torrents of tears, prostrate herself in prayer, and come home a little lightened of her sense of guilt, although it was only to fall back into remorse and distress.

Neither did Jacqueline refuse to sit with La Sarte, and the other women of the village, under the walnut trees, when the sun was going to bed, to watch the young people playing ninepins or dancing rondes. To join in *the rustic pleasures* had been an old frolic of the Demois-

selle de Faye ; but Michel Sart's wife did not join in them ; she no longer led game or jest. Still not to have sat with La Sarte would have been ungracious ; and the high-born lady of the old régime, however come down in the world, could not be ungracious. Only Jacqueline was somebody apart without designing it, even by her old quality dress, so objectionable to the villagers.

And Michel did not dance the bournée now, and offend or scandalize his partners by holding them at arm's length like a boy. He talked of markets and agriculture with the old men, or he stood with his hand on the back of his wife's chair, as he had stood with his hand on his mother's, causing malicious people to hint slyly that Maître Michel was still serviteur to his wife.

It was a dangerous experiment which Jacqueline had tried on these honest people. To descend from a pedestal among addle-brained, wooden-headed mortals, is, as a rule, to be first stared at, then hooted, and at last stoned. So would Jacqueline have fared had it not been for Maître Michel, with his hand at her back. The natives of Faye-aux-Jonquilles contented themselves with turning up their noses, and making a continual comédie of the craziness, inefficiency, and impropriety of the Citoyenne. With the knack at nicknames of their class, they termed her the Citoyenne of the citoyennes of Faye, as they had formerly termed her the Mademoiselle.

Jacqueline now saw the villagers when they came to the auberge, not as customers, but as friends. She was in the centre of the circle now ; and how strange their conversation, not restrained as formerly, sounded to her ! *The great talk was of crops and hiring fairs ; how Marion*

had been cured by a wonderful woman who knew the secret of healing ; how Landriche had put his left arm à l'envers, and so, poor fellow, had fallen under the power of a sorcerer ; how the Père Brune had been teased by the lutin, in the shape of the Will-o'-the-wisp ; and how it was feared Georgeon and his fifty wolves, invisible when hunted by honest men, were driving about the colts at night. Jacqueline did not know why La Sarte and Michel tolerated this conversation, or what elements separated it from the causerie of the Tour, or wherein lay the loss, or the gain. She only knew the peasants' speech was a dead language to her. The very dogs that escorted their masters, Finot and Médor, shaggy sheep dogs and rough hounds, were of a different species from Nerina and Tristaine. Among the dogs Jacqueline best liked the watch-dog, Marlbrook, because he held himself aloof in his kennel, like a surly bear of a gentilhomme. Among the men and women she preferred an old servant, Dominique, who had fallen asleep many years ago among the balm-scented hay at noon, lain an hour or two exposed to the light and heat, awoke with shooting pains in his head and a burning fever in his blood, and ever since had suffered from a partial loss of memory, and gone about in a dazed state. Dominique could remember what was said to him for five minutes or so, after which his memory always suffered an eclipse ; or rather it threw off all the encumbering events of the intervening years, and returned to that May morning in the hayfield, about the time when cannons were roaring and flags waving for the young German Princess, who was crossing *the frontiers to win two hundred thousand new lovers the*

day she made her entrance into Paris. Dominique's affliction rendered him a solitary man. But he was still strong and able-bodied, though his hair was white and his glassy eye had the vacancy of age; and as he was peaceable and submissive, he could do a good turn of work when he was under surveillance. He had been told repeatedly that Jacqueline was Maître Michel's wife and the young mistress at the auberge; but on the first occasion on which he met her after each telling, he glanced at her train and her hair, took off his cap, bowed to the ground, and stood asking what Mademoiselle would please to command him.

Nobody plagued Jacqueline, with her unobtrusive powerful protector hovering about, except Sylvain and Mère Jullien. And Sylvain merely troubled her with those satyr eyes of his, so hideous in their leer, so unfathomably melancholy under their unclean mockery. As for Mère Jullien, she made forward advances to her out of a magpie-like curiosity; and on finding that these were coldly received, she substituted for them tosses of the head and chatter of ci-devant aristocrats, of cattle that had left their fold, and birds their nests, and of pride getting a greater humiliation before the day was done. True, these were but gadflies' stings; still they were vexatious, for all enmity, however groundless and petty, pricks and galls a sensitive spirit.

While the people of Faye were buying and selling, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, the September of 1792, with its dreadful days and weeks, was passing over the capital of wit and luxury; and the *first* of a series of tragedies was being played, the

sound of which shook the whole Continent with horror and dismay. “Sans-culottism reigning in all its grandeur and in all its hideousness ; the Gospel (God’s message) of man’s rights, man’s might or strength, once more preached irrefragably broad ; along with this, and still louder for the time, the fearfulest devil’s message of man’s weaknesses and sins.”

Several hours after the news that Verdun was taken had reached Paris, the Committee of Inspection had done its work by arresting suspected persons, to the number of four thousand, out of the imaginary thirty thousand plotting against the Republic. The old capital, which had heard so many *Te Deums* for Louis the Great’s victories ; where the great masters had performed their dramas in salons and theatres, and the philosophers had wrangled and glittered in the women’s bureaux ; which had seen so many royal progresses from the Louvre to Chantilly, from Versailles to Saint Cloud ; —this old volcanic Paris then burst into the flames of madness and murder. The tocsin pealed on a September Sunday,—not that the soldiers or the people might arm to defend beleaguered France, but that the assassins might do their work. From Sunday till Thursday the massacres continued. The black flag waved night and day from the great towers of Notre Dame. The grinding-stone for sharpening the weapons whirled and whizzed in every street. Men ran about with their arms stripped like butchers, while women decked themselves in the spoils of the dead ; and before the four days were over, both men and women were stained and dyed red with a redness not of wine. The judges, in their tri-

coloured scarfs, sat in the neighbourhood of every prison — La Force, Châtelet, the Abbaye. Not one was overlooked ; all were searched. And from them were taken one thousand and eighty-nine helpless prisoners (of whom upwards of two hundred were priests, and thirteen women). They were briefly examined before the judges in the scarfs, then led out, and at a given signal were stabbed and hacked with axes, pikes, and sabres.

The old Marquis Cazotte's young daughter, clasping him in her loving arms, won pity even from the hearts of the murderers, and saved her father for the time.

The daughter of De Sombreuil, the Governor of the Invalides, pleaded for him, and cried that she and her father were no aristocrats. She was asked to drink aristocrats' blood in proof of her words. Poor shuddering, desperate heart, she drank the red current with which the gutters were flowing, was acknowledged to have proved her truth, and was conducted home in triumph with her rescued father.

The beautiful and faithful Princess de Lamballe was led out of the gate. When she shrank back, relenting voices in the hall bade her cry, "Live the Nation !" But before she could utter the words, she was struck down from behind. Her body was cut in pieces ; and her head, with its long blonde tresses, was fixed on a pike, and borne in procession before the windows of the Temple, to meet the eyes of her friend, whose sole protection was the frail tricoloured riband drawn round the walls.

The dead, erring and innocent, were piled in heaps ; and carts of naked human corpses were driven through

the streets to the burying-grounds of Clomart, Montrouge, Vaugirard, and the quarries of Charenton.

When dim rumours of the massacres of September reached the auberge at Faye, even calm Michel groaned and gnawed his lips. La Sarte, on the other hand, grew talkative and restless : "Is my Jonquille consenting to these wicked cruelties, for which the good Lord, and our Lady, and the saints will yet take vengeance? Why does he not forbid them,—cry aloud against them? I have a great mind to go up to Paris, and tell the wretches such things must not be." La Sarte must have been a little mad, like the rest of the women of France in her day, for she would have undertaken anything, even to the facing of one of those furious tribunals, lifting up her handsome olive face amidst the tumult, and summoning it to cease in the name of the religion that was being trampled on, and the God that was being blasphemed.

Jacqueline covered her face. Why did none of those saints who had changed persecutors into stags, and arrested falling men in mid-air that they might not fracture a bone or bruise a limb, refuse to interfere when there was a call so much louder for interference? They who had blinded multitudes, or what was better, converted them by a stroke, why did they not wield their power and work miracles to deliver a nation, the children of this unhappy France? Nay, why did not God, the Maker and Preserver of the universe, and the Blessed One who died for the human race, arise and reign?

Questions not to be answered, except by the lessons, slow to be believed, of Him, the great Example, "who learned obedience in that He suffered."

CHAPTER VII.

THE GRIPE OF THE WINTER—LOUIS CAPET DEAD FOR THE SINS
OF HIS FATHERS—THE SANS-CULOTTES AT FAYE.



INTER and dearth have come together. The latter is so great that it is proposed in the newspapers that all classes should live two days of the week on potatoes, and that every man should hang his dog. The army is threadbare and famine-struck, except where rapine feeds and clothes the soldier, and at the same time completes his demoralization. The dismal anarchy after the stormy harvest results in bread riots worse than ever in Paris, though the poor chief baker is about to pay all his debts to the nation. At Faye the pinching has commenced, not at the auberge, where everything is well ordered, and where the supplies have not been cut off; nor in the cottages, which the auberge helps, in the stead of the Tour ; but at the Tour itself, on the domain of which neither Michel at Faye, nor Jonquille at Paris, have been able to prevent further confiscations and fines. Michel tries to foist provisions on the Tour from the auberge farms, but they are carefully picked out, and sent back with polite but haughty astonishment at his error.

Monsieur announces to his registrar, by the way, that in future he will dispense entirely with domestics, except Paul the rheumatic, and the two waiting-women, Agathe and Babette.

Michel has a miserable perception, into which he dreads Jacqueline may penetrate, that the round cheek of Babette is getting hollower and hollower. She has constituted herself maid-of-all-work, and is seen by glimpses in the village, at the magazine of eatables where Citizen Pepin presides, generally sitting astride a cask and devouring a journal. Maître Michel waylays her, humbles himself to her, solicits her good offices; but in vain. She carries herself defiantly, with a look that says she will starve with pleasure at the Tour, and will not, to keep in her life, accept a grain of the store on which the rats are feeding abundantly at the auberge.

Jacqueline soliloquises half aloud,—“I rebelled and turned from them in their adversity. Why did I not find some hiding-place from which I could have issued and succoured them, though I had begged over all France for it? God will desert me in my calamity. It may be that the eagles of the valley will pluck out my eyes.”

Thus the weary months rolled on till spring came with its consolations. Then the boughs broke into blossom, and Faye was steeped in the fairness and fragrance of its jonquilles; while the spontaneous fruits and herbs afforded a prospect of relief to hungry men.

These rolling months had their annals complete. The Convention had assembled, the Mountain had been all

returned again, as had been the Girondists. Philippe Egalité, late of Orleans, was there, ready with his pen to sign away his cousin and king's head, if so be he might save and raise his own. The galleries were crowded with the Poissardes and Tricoteuses, the fish-women and knitters, who having lately figured as slaughterers, and acquired a thirst for blood, thundered down their disapprobation or applause.

Dumourier and Kellerman, with their ragged ranks, had held Valmy against the remains of ancient chivalry, princes and kings, and won the battle of Jemappes.

Louis had walked patient and devout in the Temple garden, his vacillations over for ever. Men everywhere were reading the trial of Charles the First of England. The false locksmith, who had helped Louis to make his iron press, had opened it, and disclosed its contents. Louis, in his walnut-coloured greatcoat, had been placed at the bar of the Convention to listen to his accusation ; and sat there on another and a sadder day, hearing brave Desèze and good Malesherbes plead his defence. The defence concluded, and Louis gone, the votes were taken three times. Was Louis Capet guilty ? What punishment ? Should there be delay ? All went against him. The house was crowded with members. The galleries that day were flashing with jewels, and floating with laces, and echoing with soft voices, which mingled with the discordant holàs and clicks of the knitting-needles. High above the hubbub resounded the “Death ! death !” of the vote,—death violent and immediate.

Louis had taken farewell over night of his loved ones amidst sobs and swoons ; had passed in the bleak January morning through the streets, with their eighty thousand armed men ; read his prayers ; and mounted the scaffold. There that gentle man cried "Silence!" in a terrible voice, stripped off his coat, struggled against being bound, struggled again when they interrupted him, telling the people he was innocent, and forgiving his enemies, desiring France—— The drums beat again, the six executioners struggled with the one man, and bound him to the plank. "Son of Saint Louis, ascend to heaven," said the Abbé Edgeworth. "The axe clanks down, a king's life is shorn away ; the hapless son of sixty kings has died for the crime of being a king. It is Monday, the 21st of January, 1793. He was aged thirty-eight years, four months, and twenty-eight days."

In the month of May, Michel Sart had imperative business which he could not neglect. He received a summons to contribute to the taxes, which, for the convenience of the commissary, had to be paid at the town of Ligné. This place was so many leagues distant that he could not, in the state of the roads, hope to go and return in much less than two days. With a kiss to his young wife, and an anxious charge to his old mother to take care of the idol on whom he threw back lingering, unmarked glances, he set out leaving all things quiet at Faye.

On the morning of the following day, a coach with three horses abreast, and splashed with mud, passed

along the chaussée, without halting, to the Tour. The women at the doors wondered, but soon put the subject from them, concluding that it was merely an officer from the capital on business with Monsieur. But the same afternoon, though the events could have no relation, La Sarte said to Jacqueline, “Jacquette, do not go abroad. Dominique tells me there is a strange crowd of men and women coming along the road from La Maille. The poor fellow thinks it is the old hunter’s guard of some of the gentilhommes, returned from a great veneerie. But there have been no forest laws since we became a nation. I wish we may not become something worse, my bru. I doubt if this new tintamarre presages well to Faye. I would that my Michel were at home again.”

La Sarte was outspoken when she did speak, was transparent in her meaning as Madame, and given to contemplate calamities beforehand with a courage overwhelming to those who had not the heart’s ease, far above the storms of the earth, in her velvet eyes. But she did not confide to Jacqueline that it would have been a mercy to know that the Tour had the old number of men in its service, or else that it did not rise so conspicuously out of its tender green. It did not matter, however, as the announcement brought Jacqueline flying, as she had never done before, to the front of the auberge, with her eyes fixed on the high road.

Jacqueline’s first dreadful panic was uncalled for, as before the tramp of feet and the hoarse rising murmur of voices could arrive opposite the auberge, the mob quitted

the chaussée, which ascended through the round walnut trees, and took the way to the bridge by the willows, the little church, and the house of the curé.

"If Monsieur Tilleul had remained at his post he might have been a blessed martyr this day," reflected La Sarte, with a shade of jealous reprobation.

Monsieur Tilleul had anticipated the promotion, and the orders of the Convention, had closed his church, and carried his books and manuscripts to a more secure retreat, not a little contented and comforted that, since he could do nothing for his parishioners, he should now have a little more time to devote to his interesting theory of the heresies of the Middle Ages.

Jacqueline could regard the procession from the higher windows of the auberge with comparative coolness and self-command. It was a procession of men drunk with revenge, of frail women transformed into furies, and abandoned to all excesses. They had flags and an occasional scarf. They kept a kind of rude step and rude time as they shouted, and broke into the war-like "Let us go, children of the country," which had replaced the "Gay, gay, let us marry," of the old village dances. The men were mechanics mixed with loose vagabonds in carmagnoles, rough hairy jackets, aprons, and the red cap. The women were workwomen on their own account, women of the Halle, and the haggard wives of the poorest of the men. They had coloured handkerchiefs knotted round their heads, turned up gowns half torn from their shoulders, sabots clanking and falling from their feet. The faces were eager and in-

flamed ; the arms bare to the elbows, tossing, wild and fierce. Many of the men, and some of the women, carried bright, glancing pikes, or rusty ones, scythes mounted on poles, and guns. But there were no ghastly tokens on the pikes, no fresh stains of red on the dusty and filthy garments. This was but a small detachment of the great national procession, a faint echo of the national hymn, traversing the length and breadth of the land.

All the inhabitants of Faye, except those at the Tour, were prepared to shout, "Live the Republic!" They had shouted it this many a day, the more willingly that they did not quite comprehend its import. Still there were but three who came forward to volunteer into the Corps of Deliverance, as this section of a mob called itself. Fiery little Citizen Pepin, when the demonstration was announced to him, thought that now his day of reprisals and triumph was come. He dressed himself in what spruce habiliments he had as member of the National Guard, and started in the full prospect of being elected one of the leaders of the band, in consideration of his distinguished support to the Revolution. But just when he was about to clap on his casquette, he caught sight of the front rank, and stopped bewildered. Were these his heroes—the sordid, soiled scum of the workshops and pavements of the larger towns, thus brawling themselves hoarse? And as for the women, the she-wolves,—Bast! they turned Pepin sick. Babette at the Tour would never forgive him. Pepin halted, but not from fear, for he was as valiant as his great namesake

Pepin the Curt, to whom, in spite of his republicanism, he was fond of comparing himself. But the recollection of Babette, after the sight of these women of the procession, was too much for him. He stood at ease half a minute, and dashed his hand against his forehead. Then, instead of issuing into the village street and fraternizing with the marauders, he let himself out by a back door from his maisonnette, and ran away by a by-path through the fields as fast as his little legs could carry him.

Sylvain was not so nice. He appeared fresh from the shambles, filthier than the worst, with his axe aloft. He linked his arms through the arms of the most reduced and dissolute. "Have with you, my friends; you are come for me at last. You are about to introduce me to my brother, Monsieur Coupe-Tête,—to the national window through which the bravest, most discreet faces grin queerly. Ah! life has yet some excitement, some new thing left for a tired man. 'Live the Revolution!'" He was foremost in the work of spoliation, blending a grotesque originality with his blows.

Mother Jullien was the third candidate. She approached the crew wheedling and fawning, with a meagre infant in her meagre arms. "Ah! you good people, have you come so far to rid us of the tyrants? See, I hold up my child to look at our deliverers. But know you there is here the daughter of an aristocrat, who gives herself airs, though she has sunk to be the wife of the aubergiste's son? I do not say, kill her; I have the tender heart, I. But to lead her through

the village would do her no harm, none in the world."

"The aubergiste is the mother of Jonquille Sart the deputy," growled a man's voice in objection to the petition, which had been received at first with some favour. "The Sarts are honest people. This woman must be honest also, since she has married one of them. Go, we cannot molest her." And no one was yet sufficiently insubordinate to overrule the mandate.

"My bibiche," said one of the most wretched of the women, impudently turning the current of ideas, "if we are your deliverers, lend me that cap ; it takes my fancy." And stretching out a dirty hand with talons at the end of it, she snatched off Mother Jullien's cap and left her scant hairs exposed, while she perched the trophy on the top of her own coils of hair, amidst a roar of laughter.

Mother Jullien, with her cheeks sucked in and her chin protruding in pure amazement and wrath, found voice at last : "Your bibiche, indeed ! Widow Dufosse, I know you ; ouais ! your husband was drummed out of La Maille for robbing henroosts. Give me back my cap this instant !"

"Scaramouche ! there are two words to a bargain ; it is my booty. Screech-owl, we are all equals. Who gives herself airs now, my sisters ?"

With this Mother Jullien was hustled aside, shrieking, "Antoine, Antoine ! coward, rogue ! to suffer your wife to be despoiled thus. But you would not stir, you tun,

though you were here. You would be afraid of ruffling your round cheeks, your bulk which shakes like a jelly, of which they say I am jealous, the liars ! I stamp with rage, I spit at the thought." No Antoine was there to hear the clamour, and La Jullienne might be thankful that she lost only her cap, and not the foolish head within it, in the combat which so soon drove her from the ranks of the Corps of Deliverance.

When the corps began to batter the door of the church, and succeeded in forcing it, roving here and there, breaking, tearing, and polluting the simple furniture, though it was sacrilege in the eyes of the women, and La Sarte burned to rebuke the profanity, yet La Sarte herself did not think any altar-cloth or chalice, however blessed, was so sacred as God's image in flesh and blood, which these rude assailants would have destroyed also, in the person of a "calotin" in priestly vestments, had they found him clinging within the sacred rails.

After the demolition of church property, the sans-culottes seemed contented with their work. They squatted themselves in the porch for the beggars, and began to cry for refreshments to clear their dusty throats and re-invigorate their tired limbs. There was a probability that some of them might repair to the auberge. Jacqueline crept away to her little pigeon-hole at the back of the house, and then, in the heat of the May evening, with her calèche drawn over her head, went out into the gallery. But there was not a sign of the swaggering guests, not a solitary straggler invaded

the great entrance ; and the distant tumult at the church died away rather than increased, so that Jacqueline thought the Corps of Deliverance had forgotten their fatigue and need of refreshment, and resumed their march back to La Maille. She was thankful for the escape of those dearer than her life. She was not aware of a danger which pointed specially to herself, and was saying her prayers fervently for the safety of the helpless family at the Tour, when through habit her eyes wandered to that corner of the terrace seen through the doorway and over the cottage roof. Suddenly she leaped up, clenched her hands, and screamed aloud. A body of people were crossing the terrace at that very moment, and far-away shouts rose on the spring air. The sans-culottes had changed their minds, and directed their course to the Tour. Perhaps at first they thought it uninhabited, and only at the last moment detected the slender wreath of smoke from its chimneys ; or they had taken the precaution of sending out scouts to ascertain its state of defence, before placing themselves in order of attack ; or they had received late information of the totally unprotected state of Citizen Faye in the absence of Michel Sart. But however it was, the sans-culottes were at the Tour of Faye, with their appetites whetted for plunder, ruin, and crime.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VICISSITUDES OF A NIGHT.



ILD with love and grief, and bent on sharing the fate of those from whom she had shut herself out, but not daring to tell La Sarte and thus risk being detained, Jacqueline darted down one of the outer flights of stairs, and passed through the gateway into the empty street. With no shield or disguise but her calèche on her head, she sped like lightning to the Tour.

More by instinct than design, she took the road of the ravine,—a doomed road to her. It seemed so long now since the May anemones were nodding there, the summer flowers blooming, and the thoughtless girl sporting with her lover; so long even since Michel brought her down in the mist of her wedding morning, with all the events of her past life looming behind her as spectral and unreal as the trees and the village houses before her, distorted and magnified by the mist.

The ravine was strewn with blossoms of plum and acacia like summer snow, while the wind rustled and moaned among the treetops. Jacqueline ran on demented, for what could a single girl do to save *Monsieur* and Madame from a host of implacable

enemies? And then she was not her own; she belonged, by law and gospel, as anybody could have told her, to her absent husband, Michel Sart.

The sans-culottes had not chanced on the ravine, and no other traveller was pursuing it; so the road was deserted, until, about halfway up, the coach with three horses, which Jacqueline had observed in the morning, was seen toiling down. All by-roads in France were then so execrable that this bridle road of the ravine was not worse than the rest; but the driver and his company avoided notice and interruption when they preferred it to the chaussée.

Jacqueline's progress was impeded; she stood aside; the spattered coach struggled on, none of the travellers remarking her in their preoccupation. Yet Monsieur was there, safe out of the throng; but not so Madame. Though the sun had set, Jacqueline saw Monsieur plainly, for the second time since she had quitted the Tour nine or ten months before. There were two strange men sitting opposite him, but it was Monsieur who was in the seat fronting the horses. And at the same glance she recognised, on the box behind the postillions, his old valet Paul, without whom her father never took a journey. The strangers were in riding coats and small cocked hats, such as bourgeois and noblemen wore alike now; but Monsieur was in the full dress of the old gentilhomme, even to the cordon bleu, the Order of St. Louis, worn conspicuously across his velvet coat. He did not see Jacqueline this time; he was pointing back with his hand, and at the same time bending forward and

speaking urgently to the two men in the coach with him.

Jacqueline stood and looked after the coach, stricken stupid, repeating mechanically to herself the name and number on the panel. Where Mars and Venus, and the grand old clouds of gods and goddesses used to flourish, there was now the inscription, "No. 11, Joseph Heune, Faubourg St. Denis, Propriétaire." The words said over by her tongue at last reached her brain. The spattered vehicle was a hackney coach from Paris, which the postillions had spurred and dragged through the provinces for many days. The strangers were clerks of the commune. Monsieur was arrested. He was gone, in his cordon bleu, to die like a gentleman, not like a rat dragged from its hole, though he had been philosophical. The coach was avoiding the sans-culottes, as being a vehicle of justice, and having pretensions to law and order.

She drew a long gasping sigh, and then, with another piteous cry, "My mother! my mother! doubly exposed, doubly destitute!" she continued her course.

Fortunately for Jacqueline, the terrace on the ravine side was screened by thickets of budding roses and hawthorn; and by the time she reached it the twilight had descended like a veil, while another light was blinding the eyes of the mob.

A bonfire of all the billets of wood left from the winter stock, and many a green bough torn ruthlessly from the trees of the bocage, was sparkling and blazing against *one of the tourelles*. Every door and window yawned

open, and greedy and wanton hands were gutting the old residence of the FAYES. They were not only bearing away whatever they coveted, but making irreparable havoc of the rest. Down into the fire were flung Gobelin tapestry, richly wrought pendules, marble tables, coats of mail from the armoury, suits of silk brocade from the wardrobes,—combustible or non-combustible, no matter. Monsieur's stuffed wild beasts and birds were leaping and flying heavily through the night air, like the stone falcons on the armorial bearings above the door, while the savages that had so long guarded them seemed to a distempered fancy to be starting forward and beating them down with their clubs. But the pictures were the most striking feature in the scene. How the fiery tongues leaped up on those, painted effigies, and illuminated the magic touch of Le Brun's or Mignard's hand! There were Marshal and Abbé, with truncheon and Book of Offices in their unrelaxing grasp, Baronne and Demoiselle, with coroneted and garlanded heads, and swan-like swelling necks, now pale, now glowing red, indignant and threatening at the eruption and demolition.

But no Madame, no Agathe, no Babette,—not a creature who had an interest in arresting the work of spoliation if they dared, was here, witnessing the destruction,—no one, except the prodigal child, the disinherited, disowned daughter, hiding in the familiar thickets of myrtles and laurels, flowering roses and thorns of the Tour de FAYE.

A marked man among the uncouth figures, seen by

fits and starts amongst the black smoke and the scarlet and crimson of the earth and the sky, by the showers of vivid sparks, or the living white heat of the fire, was Sylvain the butcher, his face grandly ugly and imposing, to Jacqueline's fixed, horrified eyes. Growing tired with his exertions, he took his ease in the middle of the Pandemonium. He stretched himself out, and lolled on the relics of Madame's silk and gauze curtained bed, with its satin coverlet and cambric sheets. He had a flower of orange blossom from Madame's stand, which he brandished in his greasy, foul-smelling hand, and sniffed at luxuriously. He laughed short laughs when Madame's birdcages, the doors swinging open, were toppled over from the sill; and when the little birds,—Eglantine and Rosette, with their broods,—their necks wrung, their wings ruffled, were tossed after them like single feathers in the hot blast. "Little Bastilles, the governor fled, and the prisoners strangled without loss of time!" he shouted. "Are you for roasted larks, my masters? quick, snatch them out of the oven. Me? Not I, but I should like to see some of you burn your fingers." He kicked his heels like a madman. At length something larger than a bird was hoisted out transfixated on a pike,—something which gave a perceptible convulsion, and uttered one high-pitched cry. Sylvain half started up. Jacqueline took a delirious step forward which nearly betrayed her. It was only her little pampered dog Nerina, which had followed her on the morning she left the Tour, but had not taken kindly to the raw air and the common earth. It had

been found crouching under some chair or stool, and was sacrificed with the rest of the property to the manes of an exorbitant creditor, a basely wronged, brutally retaliating nation.

Sylvain fell back discontentedly : "It is only marauding, after all. Knocking the beasts on the head is as good. The nest is here, but the human birds are flown. My faith ! and I had hoped to see sport. I had thought of a pot with roses for myself. There is a fine foreign bird down at the auberge, which Michel Sart, when he is at home, has failed to tame. The blaze here might have attracted it. I should like to have the taming of that bird, I should."

Very soon after Jacqueline had thus run away without the knowledge of her friends, Babette burst into the auberge, which had not seen her for many a day, all blown and disordered, and fiery red with haste. "Where are you, La Sarte ? Where is Maître Michel ? You have reason to keep him away. Madame comes ! Here, quick ! you must make ready for her ! Little Pepin and fat Jullien bring her. We got her out to the bocage on the first alarm, kept her lying there a while, and now they lead her down. Poor soul ! she cannot walk fast, not even for her life. Old Paul went off with Monsieur on his arrest. Yes, we were arrested this morning, the first thing, by dirt of lawyers from Paris, but they were civil people compared with these vagabonds from La Maille. Paul says, 'I go with Monsieur ; I do for him.' 'Better stay at home, my man,' replies

the griffe, behind Monsieur's back, 'or he may do for you ; comprehend you ?' 'Oh ! ça, but the rheumatism would do that, any way. I am good for no other master with this infernal rheumatism, and no master but an old friend would have helped me to endure it. I assure you Monsieur and I are two contemporary institutions,' maintains Paul, looking quite sweet at his own wit, and speaking like a scholar and a soldier, our old vinegar-cruet, Paul. 'Blue head ! then go and get finished together, if you will have it so,' grumbles the advocate, or whatever he is. But what do you think the monster Agathe does ? She has got word of both visits,—I believe she lodged information herself,—and she has her trunks ready packed and despatched. For what ? Hi ! they were not stuffed with her own goods alone. I never missed her or them, I was so taken up with Monsieur's departure, until a friend gave me warning the Philistines were upon us, too. Then when I fly to Agathe's garret, and bid her come and prepare Madame, and dress her and take her out by force if necessary, I find,—what do you think I find, La Sarte ?"

"My heart, I cannot tell," responded La Sarte, who was hurriedly shaking out a clean coverlet on her bed, drawing forward the fauteuil of the great chamber to the side of the stove, and telling over the contents of her larder on the fingers of her mind. Even La Sarte was flurried, the occasion was such a great one.

"I find," said Babette, "an affiche to this effect, dictated by Agathe,—she could not write any more than a spider,—and pinned on her pincushion. I have it

here," and she held at arm's length a slip of paper. "Listen, La Sarte : 'Gentlemen citizens, I am sorry I cannot remain to welcome you, but I wish you joy of your just vengeance. I think it right to tell you that Citoyenne Faye, last harvest, pinched black with her fingers the shoulder of me who am a free fellow-citoyenne, because I spoke one, two, three words against her wicked daughter and her accomplice Babette Benest. Also five years since, at the feast of St. Jean, I said to Madame—that is, to the Citoyenne—that she need not give the women new gowns for the hiring fairs and the Grand Mass as she had been accustomed to do, or that she might get them of an inferior material, the silly butterflies, being so elevated by the prospect of the pleasure, would not know the difference. Though she had the very moment before refused me an old used-up sacque, Madame the Citoyenne committed the enormity of flinging a glass of sugared water in my face, saying, "Take that, Agathe, to recall you to your senses, and to the consideration whether a Baronne de Faye is likely to palter like a huckster in her gifts to peasant women." I trust, gentlemen citizens, that you will remember these my injuries, besides the degradation of living twenty years at the call of another woman—and, mind you, citizens, months after livery servants were forbidden by decree of the Assembly ; which fact, with the other scandals, I have not found it in my conscience to conceal from you. I rest your humble servant, AGATHE Roussy.'"

"Poor miserable one!"

"No, don't pity her, La Sarte ; she is a villainous hypocrite who quotes the Scriptures like the diable,—an ungrateful beast, who, after having eaten of the family's bread and drunk of their cup since she was a girl,—bah ! she was born as old as my grandmother,—lifts up her heel against them. But where is Mademoiselle? is she too much occupied, or too much affronted, to receive her mother?"

"She does not know, the child; she must be in her chamber, or in the gallery where she is so fond of sitting."

"In the gallery at this hour of the clock, and in the twilight ! Miséricorde ! she will be chilled, she will catch fever. We took better care of her up at the Tour. Ah ! the changed days."

Babette ran to the gallery, but instantly returned, crying, "She is not there ; she is not in the auberge ; she has discovered the rapine ; she is up in the mêlée, insulted and abused in her own Faye, which the little Mademoiselle cried for, and prattled about, and doted upon. Oh, you are fine keepers, La Sarte and Maître Michel ! I wished ill to my old little mistress, but rather than that she should have put her finger in yon hell-fire up at the Tour, I would have thrust my whole body into it."

Away rushed Babette in another whirlwind, without waiting to dwell on probabilities, or to organize a plan of search and rescue with the sore-tried La Sarte.

Bravely but discreetly did she retrace her steps back to the riot at the Tour, with her apron turned over

her head to screen her identity. Halfway up the chaussée, in her haste she ran foul of a man on horseback. It was Maître Michel (his business concluded sooner than he expected), galloping home, pricked on by fear and care, to the auberge.

He recognised Babette, when his horse's feet had nearly struck her to the ground. He pulled up, and leaped down beside her.

"Heaven and earth! what is that yonder, Babette?" he cried, pointing to the lurid sky. "What has come to the Tour? Where are Monsieur and Madame? They are not in the hands of assassins—they are not slain?"

Babette stood still and squared her shoulders, her eyes flaming with their accusation. "And where is my Mademoiselle, Michel Sart—tell me that, then? My mistress is safe; where is yours? Mademoiselle Jacqueline quitted me, and she went to you; and you are gone away, and this crew has come, and she has run to her father and mother, and she is in the hands of the sans-culottes now. What horror!"

He staggered slightly, strong man as he was. "Do you say my mother let Jacqueline go there?" he demanded, sternly.

"Truly, there would be no letting wanted. If you knew Mademoiselle Jacqueline de Faye as well as I, her servant, know her, you, who are her husband, might have guessed there would be no asking liberty when her friends were in extremity, and you would have taken her out of the temptation and the peril with you, my fine big fellow."

Michel clenched his hands and gnashed his teeth at his own impotence, but he spent no further time examining Babette. He set loose his horse to find its own way to the auberge stable, it being too hard ridden to further his purpose by its speed, and too much a mark for observation. He then started with Babette to the Tour, running so fast that she had difficulty in keeping up with him. Once he threw her some words over his shoulder,—bitter, mournful words,—with his head on his breast, and his yellow hair drenched with sweat falling over his brow: “Yes—there, Babette, I loved my mistress, and my love has brought about her ruin, perhaps her death, this night.”

By the time Babette and Maître Michel gained the Tour, the Corps of Deliverance, having stripped the château, and thus earned a little more refreshment, had penetrated to Monsieur’s cellar, better filled than his larder. Some were drinking red Burgundy and white Moselle, cognac, and absinthe; others were singing, howling, and rioting in heathenish orgies; while others again were lying down and sleeping off the fumes of their intoxication. One unhappy reveller thrust himself so near the fire, still blazing, that he kindled like a log, and like a log was charred before the accident was found out,—the only victim who perished in the gutting of the grey old Tour of Faye. In former days it had resisted attacks successfully, when its dead foes lay thick as the autumn leaves in the bocage, among castaway swords and musquetoons, balls from culverins, and stones from battering-rams.

In order that Babette and Maitre Michel might not become additional victims, and spill their blood too lavishly, they had to be wary in their advances. It would not do to ask questions, or to push into the thick of the turmoil to judge for themselves whether or not they had come too late, or if they had been mistaken as to Jacqueline's having returned to her early home, to the scene of her sin. So great was the confusion, and so heavy the task, that the spring night was far through, and the dawn of another day in the sky, ere Maitre Michel and Babette, assured of nothing, and only taking comfort that "no news was good news," hied them home to the auberge. By this time the main body of the rioters had recruited their strength, had re-formed, and were marching back on their road to La Maille.

Babette had hardly bounded off in her paroxysm of generous reaction and old affection, when Madame was supported into the auberge by little Pepin and fat Antoine Jullien, both bare-headed and respectful, and not sparing their bodies. Indeed, little Pepin's scarecrow arms must have tingled and ached, and big Antoine must have lost a few ounces of that comely fat of which his lean vixen of a wife was really, in French fashion, inordinately jealous.

Madame, poor woman! had never walked so far before, perhaps not even in a summer day in the Tuileries gardens, or at Longchamps. Certainly never in the dews of a spring twilight; but of course she had never before to escape from the ghastliest of dangers and of deaths.

Her fine feathers were woefully draggled ; her head had a little of a palsied shake and a delirious cast about it ; but still her bearing was intact, irreproachable. She sank down in the chair by the stove in her denaturalized daughter's bourgeois abode. She bowed her thanks right and left ; she did not appear to miss Jacqueline, she did not ask for her, perhaps she did not remember that she ought to have met her lost child here, for her first words startled her listeners as if she were out of her mind. "My good La Sarte, the Baronne de Faye perished in the assault of the rabble on the Tour de Faye this night of May, 1793," she said.

"God be praised ! no, Madame," La Sarte assured her, "you are safe, and all at the auberge are at your service."

"No, no, my noble Madame, you are quite entire in life and limb. You are only a little fatigued, a weakness from which the quality among the saints up yonder will soon restore you," Pepin and Jullien confirmed soothingly.

"I tell you, La Sarte,—and I am not accustomed to contradiction,—the Baronne perished. She who speaks to you is no more than Diane Ligny, without a servant or a sou in the world, a woman who has no home, no wardrobe, nothing. Fy ! I am dressed out in unbecoming finery," taking her robe disapprovingly between her finger and thumb ; "you must lend me some of your clothes to-morrow, La Sarte, that I may dress as suits my rank, and you

must find some work for me, 'a poor old woman, for charity's sake.'

Madame, to the distress of her hearers, stuck to her point. Either her mind was slightly affected by her misfortunes, or, as was more probable (for she was perfectly rational and acute on all the details), the theatrical impulse which is strong in the French nation possessed her. Finding that she had a new rôle to play, she threw herself into it instantly, and acted it so thoroughly that she succeeded in identifying herself with her part.

In this she was a true type of her nation, for there is about the French people a childlikeness which is half sublime, half ludicrous. Witness their credulity in the two opposite extremes of superstition and scepticism, their vanity, and their passion for stage effect. These were rampant throughout the Revolution. Men must legislate, struggle, and die as ancient Greeks and Romans; women must sympathize with them, strike their own blows, and die too like Greeks and Romans. Mirabeau must ask, when he hears the cannon fire, from where he lay sobbing out his soul, "Have we the Achilles funeral already?" Le Pelletier, assassinated for his vote of death against the King, must be borne to the Pantheon of great men, his body in its shroud half bare, his death-wound exposed, while oak crowns are cast down from windows as the procession passes, in the style of Julius Cæsar. Manon Roland, amidst the forebodings of the Girondists at her banquet, must shed the rose-leaves from her

bouquet in true classic fashion, over the wine in which Barbaroux ought to drink to the welfare of the Republic; must sigh for writing materials at the foot of the scaffold to record for posterity her thoughts on the last journey. Saddest, most terrible theatricality of all, that ghastly half pleasantry with which Charlotte Corday answered the foreigner who sheltered her from the shower, and brought her the fiacre, on her return from the Convention, where she had hoped to meet Marat,—“ You will know my name before long.” Has any one ascertained what the French Revolution would have been like, had there been no Greek and Roman models?

Scared from the Tour by Sylvain’s horrible hints, and satisfied in a dim way from what she had heard that Madame was not there, Jacqueline wandered home within half an hour after her mother had arrived, and found her seated by the stove in the great chamber of the auberge.

Jacqueline fell at her knees, weeping, thanking God once more, and crying, “ My mother, my mother, pardon me.”

Madame, in her new character, put out her hand, not to pardon and bless the penitent, but to raise her up. Her degradation had given her back her daughter. “ Yes, Jacqueline, for, see, I am a low woman too. You and I will dwell together, and work, and go to market, my daughter ; La Sarte will be so good as to teach us how. We are poor, but we are honest, and

we will not be obliged to our neighbours for our life, and they shall run no risk."

Jacqueline was forced to be content. She did not comprehend whether this was Madame's railery, indomitable to the end, or madness. Another thought caused her to spring up and wring her hands anew. "Oh ! my father, my father ! he is not here, he is in arrest, he is on his way to prison and to death !"

"Assuredly," acquiesced Madame, in her stoicism, but growing greyer in complexion as she spoke, and moving her lips stiffly ; "Monsieur did not perish. His arrest happened before the swarm of rats climbed to the Tour. He departed for Paris like a noble in peril."

"I must follow him, Madame ; I must save him."

"To whom do you speak, my little one ? There is no Madame here," corrected her mother, on the alert against self-betrayal. "As to going to Paris, to serve Monsieur is the chief duty of his retainers. The king is our first father on earth,—the good God guard my little father in the Temple !" exclaimed Madame, in pathetic parenthesis ; "Monsieur is the second, for us who are people of the people. But you can do very little, poor girl," argued Madame plaintively, dissuasively. "Why should you go the long way to Paris ? Peasant girls go on foot and have no fear ; but you are so young, and the roads are so encumbered."

"I can go to Jonquille Sart. Oh, I can do something. I may have a charrette and a man, and La Sarte is known in the auberges in the provinces. I

must go, I must go. Think of Monsieur alone, with nobody to cite friends to plead for his release, to receive his last commands, and kiss his cheeks before he die, if they kill him. Let me go on the instant, lest I be too late."

"Alas! I dare not refuse," granted Madame, heroically. "It would not have been for the Demoiselle de Faye; but if Jacqueline Sart, the registrar's wife, can do anything to repair his misfortunes and save Monsieur, again I say I dare not refuse. And you will say to him, Jacqueline," and Madame's voice broke a little and vibrated strangely in its silvery pitch,—"the late Madame could not go to him. She was a great lady that Madame, and had been reared like a princess, when princesses had courts and vassals. Monsieur was always very noble and considerate, and kissed her hands, and expected nothing from her save that she should preserve his honour, and shine in her sphere. But she has perished, and in her stead there is an old woman, Diane Ligny, who would have walked every foot of those leagues to be near Monsieur, and would have brushed his shoes for him and counted it an honour, and cut his bread, and faced his enemies, and stood by him as long as those enemies would have left her life. But she is very frail this old woman, and never thinks to walk more. She does better; she sends him her young daughter."

"Hold," interposed La Sarte; "wait till Michel returns. It is impossible you can go without seeing your man, Jacquette."

In the teeth of the responsibility lately brought home to her, La Sarte spoke faintly. Filial duty reigned paramount in France, even conjugal duty did not compete with it. Here was a marvellously fine opportunity, all things considered, for Jacqueline, with her mother's consent, doing the last duty to her father, and atoning for the guilt of rebellion. La Sarte, who had the soul of an enthusiast and a martyr, was disposed in all single-heartedness, in spite of her words, to suffer Jacqueline to lay hold of the opportunity. It was only doing as La Sarte would be done by.

"Wait till after to-morrow ! Oh, La Sarte ! lose twenty-four, forty-eight hours, and six lost already, and Monsieur's hours perchance numbered ! Michel will understand ; you will explain. I set out this night. It is not yet supper-time, and there is a moon takes me to Champs, while the roads are still clear, and the sans-culottes detained at the Tour. Dominique drives me ; I see him in the entrance. He knows nothing of the event, or he has forgotten it already ; but he does everything I tell him, and manages the cart and the horse to a marvel. Mother of Michel, you will not say no to me ? You have never heard Michel say no to me," and Jacqueline would have knelt to La Sarte next.

The mother of Michel did not say no. The journey to and from Paris, which the auberge carts had often made before under the care of Dominique (whose affliction did not disqualify him for their safe conduct, while it rendered him, like a child, the safest messenger on a dangerous errand), did not present itself to the hardy

peasant-born woman as a great adventure even in those unsettled days. La Sarte's Jonquille, Jacqueline's brother-in-law, would protect her in the wild capital. The wonderful young deputy would do Monsieur's business if it could be done, uphold Jacqueline in the trial, tell whose wife she was, send her back in safety, when all was over for life or death, to Faye.

Thus these women at the auberge, so different in rank and character, acted alike, just because they were women, and leaped at conclusions. Indeed, notwithstanding all their disappointments, sins, and repentances, they were romantic, self-sacrificing, pure, and trustful as children or angels. For there are no wrinkles in a woman's heart, however old and artificial. With all her proverbial guile and cunning, she has no real craft, no thorough cold-heartedness. Madame and La Sarte settled Jacqueline's matter without delay. They sent her away by the light of the moon, dressed in bourgeois clothes, in a peasant's cart driven by an able-bodied imbecile, among hordes of sans-culottes, and worse dangers still. They did not wait for Michel, who had so great a stake in the expedition. They did not wait for Babette, who, being a woman, might have behaved no better than themselves, but who was at least eminently practical.

CHAPTER IX.

JACQUELINE'S JOURNEY TO PARIS.

 HUS it happened that Jacqueline was as many hours in advance of her husband, as the coach with Monsieur and his captors was in advance of Jacqueline and Dominique. Michel immediately followed his young wife, but missed trace of her when, taking alarm at threatening symptoms on the great road, she caused Dominique to drive along a by-way. Baffled as he went farther on, he turned back, and had great difficulty in recovering traces of the travellers, to whom he did not dare to attract attention by making public inquiries.

It was not impossible for a girl of seventeen, like Jacqueline, to go to Paris as she did. Girls did it in more difficult circumstances. Necessity is the great leveller, and high breeding is stimulated by danger. Mademoiselle de la Glace walked from Lyons to Paris to lift up her feeble voice on behalf of her father the commandant. She attained her object, though she died of pain and bliss and mortal weariness, on the way back with her prize to their home by the swift-flowing Rhone.

Jacqueline turned aside from the great road when she was overtaken by a cart filled with manacled men and

women. This cart was escorted by a crowd not so careless and aimless as that which had visited Faye, but one sullenly and ominously tramping along in good order, towards some town where stood a tree of liberty with its red cap, and a file of the National Guard with arms presented. The prisoners looked proud and high-hearted, as most of the aristocrats did. They conversed together and encouraged each other, when they were not gagged, as they jolted along ; and presented indomitable fronts to the blackness of darkness which lay before them.

Jacqueline glanced fearfully at the occupants of the cart. She knew some of them by sight. The tall old militaire with the queue, in the faded uniform, was General du Roche, who used to come to the Tour long ago. And, stop ! surely the white, haggard face held up to catch inspiration from his was that of Mademoiselle Claire, his niece, who had played with Jacqueline, pulled flowers, nursed dolls, mimicked her uncle's taking snuff, when the two were happy, heedless children.

None of the company, in their pre-occupation, recognised Jacqueline in her altered circumstances. Had they done so, it would only have been to scorn her as a traitress to her order. She was saved this contumely ; but she sickened at the spectacle, and enjoined Dominique to drive aside.

Jacqueline drove on for days and days, in the soft sunshine or the soaking showers. She managed to rest at the villages and avoid the larger towns. For the most part the people of the village inns, where the horse often stopped of itself, knew something of the Sarts and

their family history, and also of Dominique, and were therefore civil and asked no questions. Sometimes the aubergiste was also maire, and able to give Jacqueline valuable protection. And she herself laboured, as she had not done in her year of married life, not only to conciliate everybody (that was part of the rôle of a great lady), but to preserve the air of her assumed class, and thus draw down no observation.

The country—its ditch divisions overflowed, its mills often deserted, its châteaux bearing the sullied, blighted tokens of pillage and fire, and its cottages more of hovels than ever—was strewn with ashes instead of jonquilles, as they got nearer and nearer to the great capital. The richer grains were displaced by rye and beans, which in their turn gave place to fallow fields. The dire distress of the people, in the interruption of trade and agriculture, and the previous year's bad harvest, was everywhere pressingly evident. And the famine prevailing was the more dismal for the spring sun and the rain and the green growth, which were here insufficient to stop its ravages.

The churches were closed or closing ; the belfries with their carillons were silent. Still where four roads met, or in alleys of chestnuts and elms, Jacqueline would come on a laure, or praying station, with a fresh chaplet, or a little wax taper newly blown out, and still guttering in the wind. These stations were generally in the form of a votive tablet, or wayside cross, erected to no more distinguished saints than Jean the Silent, Basle the Hermit, Berthe the Curer. Superstition kept its ground

where religion had been routed, and even stepped forth in profane leering guise in the large towns, where fortunetellers began to abound and flourish.

Occasionally Jacqueline passed over pastoral, hilly tracts, chill even in this sunny France, where the lonely-looking, weather-beaten shepherds, in their long grey frieze coats, with their scrips, reminded the spectator more of men perishing of cold in winter storms, than of the Arcadias of Court poets and workers in porcelain. Now and again, in the early morning, she detected unshaven, unwashed faces, with hollow eyes, peering out of the broken windows of granges, or even from the half-open doors of pigeon-houses. She guessed that these were the miserable creatures whom the women of France of every degree, in thousands and tens of thousands, were risking their lives to save, though not unfrequently they had never set eyes on them till they found them in their extremity. They fed and comforted them with that great human charity which seemed blotted out of Courts and assemblies of men, conveying to them bread and wine, with dry leaves and hay for their beds, and ointment for their wounds. Jacqueline would long to tell these outcasts that they need fear no harm from her, but she dared not communicate with them, or offer them a cast in the charrette, lest, half a league farther on, she might rattle up to two or three of the patriots. These bronzed, terrible Ishmaelites of the South trudged along, crying malediction on the growing heat, but fearing no challenge. Their clasp knives were always sharp. A *little thing*, a relic of a ring, the pearl circle of a minia-

ture, might provoke them to violence. They always reminded Jacqueline of Sylvain, with this distinction—that they were brute beasts, stolid and gruff, without his wild jollity and deep melancholy.

Once she crossed the outskirts of a camp of soldiers on their march to join the army, and gazed with wonder and admiration, not unmixed with qualms of alarm, at the scene so like a fair in the green wood. Unyoked carts, which peasants had brought out with provisions, formed a barricade, behind which the horses busily munched their provender. Market-women and girls, in their white caps and striped petticoats, had ventured out into the lively green lights and shadows, and chaffered busily over what food they had still to sell—dried herbs, fresh vegetables, thin slices of hung beef and ham, and rye loaves. There were martial figures, already cultivating and learning to twirl moustaches, though their uniform was in rags ; and there were conscripts already forgetting their villages in their love for their new trade,—men who were on their long way to Belgium, Italy, Austria, Egypt, Spain, Russia, to leave their bones on far separated battle-fields, and win their share of world-wide renown. Cows were led out, lowing their objections, and women were milking them into little tin cups pressed upon them by the soldiers. One thirsty man shouted, “No ceremony !” and offered his helmet as a vessel. Bright, irregular-featured, swarthy gipsies of vivandières were tripping about in their braided jackets and caps, the smartest of the set. Most of them had drums slung round their thin brown necks, on which

they beat noisily the step of the regiment, to add to the clamour, and astonish the weak nerves of their foolish sisters the milkmaids, who were red and white in comparison, and round-eyed, though pinched in flesh,—and whose attempts to attract the admiration of the boys of the regiment, the vivandières held in disdain and spite, twirling their drumsticks, and turning up their noses at the silly, incapable intruders. But in spite of those poor, lively, wandering stars of vivandières,—like other wandering stars, apt to be quenched and to fall, meteor-like, into the abyss,—an eye-witness better informed than Jacqueline has recorded, that when a detachment of an army, whether king's or republic's, halted for a short time in the greenwood, the sweetest principles of human nature did their work. The boldness and frankness of the men in the prospect of their speedy departure to danger and death, and the admiration, pity, and softness of the simple countrywomen, were so irresistible to each other, that the priests were called on to perform their part in the great law, and “there were marriages in the covered waggons in remembrance of the Frankish kings.” Did these brides and bridegrooms ever meet again? and after what changes would they recognise each other on earth, or in the spirit world?

Sometimes Dominique made awkward mistakes. Knowing Jacqueline simply as Mademoiselle, he was perplexed by her driving with him in Maître Michel's charrette, till it occurred to him that the quality had whims. “That was one of them,” he said, after musing for ten minutes at a time, “to ride in carts at this hour

of the clock, and to stand and sit there in rows with their hands tied. My faith! that was a clever mask, a fine joke. Beat me, Mademoiselle, but let me laugh my fill when I think of it, for if I do not laugh I shall burst." And then he would chuckle loudly at the wit of the thing, till it was quickly wiped out of his brain. Jacqueline and he occasionally heard the ringing volley of a platoon of the National Guard fired in some obscure quarter, where there was as yet no private edition of the guillotine, that gaunt form being an exclusively Parisian novelty in May, 1793. Jacqueline cowered down for a moment, as if she herself were shot, and prayed fast. Dominique paused, cocked his ears, looked at her with a disturbed and mysterious air,— "I hope it is not Jules Gobereau's affair again, my Mademoiselle."

"What was Jules Gobereau's affair?"

"Chut! Why, poor Jules was a débonnaire young fellow like me the other day,—peaceable, laborious; I swear it. But he had a pretty little cousin; she was the Rosière—let me see, last year. Jules was fond of her as a sister,—as a cat loves cream. But the young Count de Lude would have her at his own price. The girl disappeared. Jules left off his work and went searching for her, and vowing vengeance like a madman. He did not search long; he was found in a thicket in the Count's little mall, shot through the heart. Suicide, it was said; but, hush! if Jules took his own life, it was with the young Count's gun he did it, for it was that gun which was lying beside him. It

was a question of the quality, and there was only Jules' mother, a poor widow, to make a work about her two children. Go ! there was no more to say. There were many such questions of the quality," continued Dominique, bending his white brows. "They are not for you to hear, Mademoiselle ; but there was the Park of Stags up at Paris and who filled it ; and the baths of the little children's blood to make his old Majesty young again—ah ! we all heard of them, we of the people ; but they do not make him young again, no, by the good God, and all these things were years ago. Now we have the good young Prince—the Desired call we not him with reason?—and the fair young Princess, who is this week entering her Paris in triumph. Is it not so ? And perhaps, my Mademoiselle, Jules stole the Count's gun and did the suicide after all," finished Dominique, slyly.

They passed through a little post-town, where men and women were dancing about a tree of liberty, encircling it with their wasted arms, and bounding and wheeling in horrible mockery of child's play, thus bringing home the dread winter of vengeance and churlish retribution,—just as happier men and women once danced about the maypole, bringing the summer home. Dominique spied something in a shop window, and before Jacqueline could stop him, he leaped down and left the cart in the middle of the street. He proceeded to the shop where the ware had attracted his attention. It was a cake of chocolate, which he had seen milled and frothed, in the old days

of saucy waiting-maids and grooms of the chamber, as the staff of life of the nobles.

"We must have this, is it not so, Mademoiselle, for our *gouté*?"

Alas! poor light-headed, white-haired Dominique, the very buying of the chocolate compromised them. The tree of liberty was forsaken; inquisitive, suspicious, hostile faces in workmen's caps, and women in like gear, gathered about the cart. "Aristocrats in disguise! Think of their audacity to be returning to Paris. But they say twenty thousand dogs have already crept in there, to overthrow the Convention and murder our brave deputies. Search them, arrest them; bid them go through the little ceremony of saying, 'Live the Republic.' Citizen and Citoyenne, if you please, we will thank you to repeat 'Live the Republic' before you move a step farther."

"What is it—that Republic?" asked Dominique, scratching his head, and not heeding his mistress's terrified promptings. "I will say, 'Live the King!' if you will. We have all heard that often enough," added the unfortunate man, with a memory too long for the past, but too short for the present.

"Death! Do you hear that? Drag them before the maire."

"Oh! listen, good citizens; do not detain us," implored Jacqueline; "it is on a matter of life and death I travel. I am a deputy's sister; I go to him. I say, 'Live the Republic!' so does he, when I tell him. Be reasonable, be merciful, my fellow-citizens. Domi-

nique, my poor boy, repeat ‘Live the Republic !’ to these honest people.”

“Certainly ! Live the Republic ! whatever it is, when you bid it, Mademoiselle,” acquiesced Dominique, with a low, deferential bow.

“Do you hear ? ‘Mademoiselle,’ and the chocolate, and her complexion of lilies ? These are aristocrats, and we cannot let them pass.”

Desperation inspired Jacqueline. She sprang out of the cart, and threw herself among a group of women, who were wagging both tongues and heads, and caught hold of their hard hands—“Yes, it is true, I was an aristocrat ; but it is also true that I am the sister, by marriage, of Jonquille Sart, the deputy for the Mousse. My father is gone as a prisoner to Paris, and I follow to save him, or to kiss his hands and receive his last blessing, if I am not happy enough to die with him. I have not spoken to him for ten months, and then I offended him bitterly—think of it ! think of it ! Oh, have none of you fathers, awful as avenging angels and dear as your own souls, or children who may grieve you in their sin and misery, but who would lay down their heads to shelter your wronged and revered heads in the day of wrath ? Then plead for me ; and as for him there, my companion, don’t be hard upon him. Don’t you see, though he is big and stout, though he can guide the horse, and has silver hair like a wise old woman’s, he is an everlasting child of the good God’s ?”

The women were touched, overcome. They wrung

her hand back again. Some of them turned aside their faces, and sobbed piteously. They lifted her into the cart and walked on each side of it, a volunteer escort. "You are a brave girl. We listen to you; you did well to trust us. Yes, we have fathers, we have children, and these men, our husbands and friends, will not hurt you. Look you, they shake hands with the poor imbecile and teach him to say 'Fraternity.' We shall see you beyond the town, that you may not be stopped by the picquet yonder. A good adventure to you, Citoyenne heretofore Mademoiselle. Filial virtues are divine."

These were, at least for the time, the sole virtues to which the maddened heart of France melted. Gone back as it was to brutal barbarism, it had still the savage instinct of animals for the simple ties of nature. The slaughtering hordes of Paris led about their little children, while their hands were smeared and reeking with blood. They were, perhaps, educating them according to Jean Jacques' system. They embraced them passionately, talked to them gently, held them up to see ghastly sights, or, if the children preferred it, to pat the horses in the tumbrils, or clutch at the unclaimed pet dogs roaming wild and famished about the streets.

At last Jacqueline reached the barrier, with its guard-house and soldiers,—now all that stopped her entrance to the great bubbling-over city. There the name of Jonquille Sart, Deputy and Commissary, passed her and Dominique without difficulty, as soon as it was found

they carried no goods with them. There was no more left for Jacqueline to do but to drive through the thronged streets, where swift coaches, and even fiacres, were now out of fashion. She patted Dominique continually on the arm, saying, "The Street of the Old Augustins, Deputy Jonquille Sart, No. 5 ; Street of the Old Augustins, Dominique."

CHAPTER X.

PARIS IN 1793--A SPARTAN DEPUTY AND HIS FRIENDS—
MAITRE MICHEL COMES UP WITH JACQUELINE.



THE great city, where the most tragic play the world ever saw was being played out, consisted of a mere mass of high houses, closely crowded together. The only exception was the Faubourg St. Germain. Here and there, it is true, a noble old church, either shut up or grossly polluted, gloomed down on the scene; and here and there a drowsy or dissolute old convent was converted into a meeting-place of the clubs. All was commanded by the two great towers of Notre Dame. The kennels in the middle of the streets were full of the sharp mud of Paris, and lit up at night by the lamps swaying from side to side, the ropes of which had almost as deadly a signification as the guillotine.

No thunder-cloud hung over the place. The violets of the flower-sellers scented the air, as if they had not to contend with the foul taint of gigantic murder; the loyal white lilies, trodden down in the Tuileries gardens, were budding in new beauty at republican windows, where men had not only renounced their king, but were fast renouncing both humanity and

Divinity. The traffic was compressed into narrow channels. The shops of the quarters were doing a brisk trade, particularly those of the pork butchers and the wine dealers. Among the bulky casks and bright pewter pitchers of the latter, men in carmagnoles and red caps were playing dominoes, and congregating round central figures, who read the journals from early morning till late night. Innocent, sweet faces of girls, crowned by the tricoloured cockade, appeared among those of ardent, devoted men. Water carriers, with their pails, jostled liquorice-water sellers with their jars. Grisettes, in their peasant caps, tripped against chiffons, or washerwomen, with their piles of dressed linen, composed chiefly of starched cravats. The merchants of the four seasons, the costermongers, vended everything under the sun, shouting as if to drown the voices of the other street criers ; while the gilles, or mountebanks, attempted to eclipse the whole. Mingled inextricably with the crowd were the brazen poissardes, or fish and vegetable women, with their new name of tricoteuses, and their sign of coarse knitted work carried ostentatiously over the arm ; the brown, brawny, lounging, cruel-eyed lazzaroni strangers ; and the slighter, nervous, eager figures of the true Paris workmen.

Jacqueline drove along half stupefied, half excited by the strange chaos. What appeared to her not the least strange thing was, that she, the daughter of the De Fayes,—who had bowed and curtsied, touched *their swords* and dragged their trains, at the Louvre.

Marly, Versailles, St. Cloud, who had only visited at the great hotels, with their courts and gardens, the backs of which were to the street,—was, on her first visit to Paris, driven by a half-witted labourer, in a peasant's cart, to the lodging of a people's deputy, to beg his intercession for Monsieur his old sieur.

Sometimes Jacqueline would start, tremble, and look searchingly round her. Might she not see Monsieur at liberty, and walking among these passengers,—who were not all rabble, and some of whom looked very much at their ease, as if all were peace and prosperity in the land,—on his way to Méot's or to the Club of the Feuillants? At other times she would grow cold, faint, and white, and fall back into a little heap in the cart. What if it were all over, and her father dead, without having forgiven her?

But within two streets of the great Rue Augustins, Jacqueline saw a spectacle which fascinated her. It was nothing horrible, but it was wonderful: universal passion ruling a mighty multitude, as God's great law rules the stars in the sky.

Suddenly a mass of human beings poured into the street, and choked up every avenue and outlet, wedging the charrette into a porte cochère till the mass rolled by. The crowd consisted chiefly of women, or at least of persons in women's gear, for the authorities certified there were black beards to be found under the caps, and pistols in the breasts of the jackets. They were not infuriated; they bore no more frightful tokens than the sugar-loaves and boxes of spices they

Commissary Sart is at home to women—ouais, Citoyenne! As you have not been here before, mount two stages, take the turning to the left, and address yourself to the third door."

Jacqueline mounted toilsomely, turned to the left, and addressed herself modestly to the third door, which stood ajar.

"Enter," cried a clear, melodious voice, which proved the concierge right in saying that the Citizen Commissary and Deputy was at home.

Jacqueline crossed the threshold into an empty room, from which another door, also half open, led into a second cabinet, where the opening and shutting of drawers, and the commencement of an air from *Figaro*, in a bird-like whistle, betrayed the unseen tenant. Jacqueline stood still in the first room till the Deputy and Commissary thought fit to show himself. Certainly nothing around betrayed the arrogance of the parvenu, of the man suddenly raised to power, unless it be that the pride of simplicity is the greatest pride of all. The auberge at Faye was a luxurious and splendid home compared to this room, with its bare and austere aspect. The stove was of coarsest iron, the bed a straw mattress, with a coverlet of wolf skins; the other articles of furniture were a common deal table, covered with official papers in files, and a shelf on which stood the little basin and jar with water, and the morsel of a diamond-shaped mirror.

This assumption of simplicity has been a favourite practice with French artists and authors time out of

mind. Occasionally they vary it with the addition of filth and squalor,—with fragments of meat, bits of tobacco, and the spilt wine of previous debauches. La Sarte's son had none of the habits of the true Bohemian, but he loved to drill himself in the ascetic discipline of the men of arts and letters,—the Spartan frugality and stoicism affected by some of the most illustrious members of the Assembly and the Convention. In the pursuit of the ancient Greek virtues there had even been a proposal that the black broth of the Lacedæmonians should be revived, and the citizens be compelled to dine together in public, and confine themselves to the one severely classical dish; in which proposal a republican jester had acquiesced, with the provision that the broth should be stirred by the hand of the skilled artiste Méot.

There was, however, one evidence of self-indulgence in Jonquille Sart's room, hinting that, as usual, there were exceptions to his rule. A dandy puce-coloured coat lay upon the wolf skins.

For a few minutes the pulling out and pushing in of the drawers, and the whistling from *Figaro*, were continued without any reference to the visitor. Then they stopped abruptly. Next a lively voice called out a warm welcome, but it was a case of mistaken identity. “Can it be you, Félicité, chaperoned by Madame, making me smell your name?”

Jacqueline hesitated how to answer, as she was not Félicité. A very handsome young man in his shirt sleeves darted out and confronted her. He stood con-

fused and transfixed, blushing for the want of his coat and for his blunder, with a dim sense of recognition struggling with forgetfulness and ignorance.

Jonquille Sart bore no trace of resemblance to his elder brother. Without being a fop, a petit-maitre, or an exquisite Chevalier de Faye, Jonquille Sart was a handsome lad of three-and-twenty. His face had something of the southern tone and delicate cutting of his mother's, but was much more irregular in feature. It owed its attractiveness to its beaming play of expression, its generous expansive enthusiasm, its tremulously keen sensibilities. The light that never was on sea or land kindled its bluntest points and worst hues. In place of La Sarte's peaceful velvet eyes, Jonquille had those ominously brilliant yet melting violet eyes, which, with his dark hair (in vain swept back into a queue, and curling in pertinacious waves on his forehead), completed the charm of his physiognomy.

Jonquille Sart was one of that patriotic band which included among its members the aristocrats, De la Rochefoucauld, the brothers Lemeth, Lafayette, Montmorenci,—names found in the *Libre d'Or* of French nobility; and the people's representatives, Bailly, Roland, and men written in other Golden Books, like him who turned to the Queen in her adversity, and him who was carried on a mattress into the Convention to vote *not death* to the King. They were of different political shades, but alike in this, that they had dreamt a noble dream of freedom, and that the love of it grew in some of them to a lust. They

committed the fatal error of worshipping an idea, and substituting it for their personalities. "My name be blighted provided the Republic is established." They, poor, stumbling, maddened tools, thought themselves the only instruments which the great God in whom they refused to believe could work with; and that the end justified the means, and sanctioned the doing of their work, however ruthless, atrocious, and diabolic. But all the Republicans, as history testifies, did not travel on to the godless, inhuman end of annihilation. Many an earlier hero, the idol of an hour, withdrew in honest detestation, preferring to lie in prison, and even to swell the bloody harvest of the guillotine.

Jonquille Sart was one of those Modérés who had conceded too much and struggled too long, and were now hurrying forward to the last desperate contest with the terrible extreme of the Mountain. Already his young and naturally joyous face bore traces of apprehension, indignation, and worrying care.

"Pardon, Citoyenne," murmured Jonquille, sliding towards his coat, and investing himself in it by a coup-de-main. His starched cravat, the gold butterfly in his breast, and his morocco boots, added to the fresh spruceness of his coat, made up a costume not unbecoming, or unworthy of a young man's vanity. It certainly betrayed a very different order of things from that which his locale implied. "I was mistaken, but I am mistaken no longer. Apparently I have the honour to speak to the Demoiselle de Faye." Jonquille sank his voice warily, and then raised it again in a vivacious, heartfelt exclamation,

"But, Mademoiselle, why are you here? I must be cruel enough to say it is the worst place in the world for you. Oh! I would do anything for you, but if all the demoiselles in France come to me, I shall soon not be able to help myself."

Jacqueline stared at him in consternation. Jonquille, then, did not know their relationship, nor her claim upon him. That was like Michel,—he was so slow. The peasant blood was sluggish, though Jonquille's ran fast; perhaps Michel did not think it worth while to apprise Jonquille that he had married Monsieur's daughter the preceding autumn. No, it had not been so great a gain, that was the truth. La Sarte, though she could read, could not write. News travelled with wondrous slowness from the provinces, and letters often miscarried.

"I am the wife of Michel—did you not know?" Jacqueline said at length.

"Impossible!" protested Jonquille, getting red and hot. "Mademoiselle, I know Michel; I am a thousand times surer of him than of myself. I am certain he would not insult the misfortunes of any woman, least of all the daughter of Monsieur. I implore you not to be guilty of an incredible fraud to obtain the protection which I offer you freely, in so far as it is in my power," he concluded, gravely and reproachfully.

"Jonquille Sart, there is no fraud; I am noble," Jacqueline reminded him, drawing herself up proudly and looking him in the face, her eyes striking him like balls. "Neither was Michel to blame; I threw myself

on his generosity" (she did not say from what danger), "and there was no other way——" she broke off with a fluttering, shamed sigh.

"Then I suppose it must be true," admitted Jonquille, still extremely puzzled, and not able to shake off his doubts. "Forgive me, Mademoiselle—Madame my sister, that I disbelieved it. But to think that the Mademoiselle de Faye is the charming young wife of Michel!" and now he gave a wondering exultant laugh "the old dog has stolen a march upon me. But how, Citoyenne? is Michel with you?" as if the news still wanted corroboration.

Jacqueline shook her head. "Oh no; I am come up after my dear father. Oh, Citizen Jonquille, will you look for Monsieur, help Monsieur? and I will love you for it, hold you as more than my brother, and bless you all my wretched life."

"Ah, softly!" cried the young commissary. "Here are more blunders and troubles"—walking to her side, and picking up her handkerchief. "Tell me more, my former Demoiselle de Faye, how it came to pass."

Jonquille was tender and respectful in his inquisitiveness, and listened patiently to all Jacqueline's confused statements, and her unconsciously selfish and audacious requests. But every little while he muttered to himself, shook his handsome young head, and laughed a startled gratified laugh in the middle of his own burdens. "But how,—the grave, stiff Trojan Michel the husband of this gentille maîtresse?—his mistress, the noble Demoiselle de Faye? Certes, I remember

another story, when she was a saucy, gracious little lady,—she still looks saucy for a poor little woman whose head is not very firm on her shoulders any more than mine. But our Michel, who would ever have thought it? The mégères of slander must have been very busy in that innocent little hamlet, or the sans-culottes must have been very near cropping this passe-peintre of quality, when that was the only resource. She is as a passe-peintre to my rose Félicité; at the same time she is a true, brave girl, as these aristocrats mostly are, the young ones above all. It would be well if every good girl were like them in that respect," he commented to himself, emphatically. He said at last, "My sister, I shall inquire for Monsieur. I have seen certain lists for the last few days, and his name was not in them; I would have been sure to remark it. That is but a pinch of hope; but if you live here long, you will learn it is something. As for you, it is certain you cannot stay here, or go any farther with that poor boy Dominique. I am surprised that Michel sent you so far with him."

Jacqueline murmured an explanation that Michel did not send her.

"Michel did not send you, you say? Ah, well, he let you depart, which is quite the same thing. It is necessary that you go with me to some of my friends, who will receive you for love of me, and whom, I hope, you will love in your turn," he added, meaningly. Then he followed up the sentence with a high-flown sentimental flourish, of which the sole merit lay in this fact, that in spite of his experience of men, Jonquille

was in his extravagance infatuatedly and inveterately sincere. "All is changed!" he asserted, in an exalted voice but in perfect good faith; "virtue is the only honour in the Republic one and indivisible. Simple beauty and excellence are rated infinitely higher than rank and fortune!" A state of matters more like Utopia than it was like France immediately before the Reign of Terror.

This enunciation of his creed was interrupted by a tumult of loud, clacking voices on the stairs. Jonquille stamped his foot, tore his hair, and smote his breast, but took care to tell Jacqueline not to be frightened, for the crowd was composed of women. "You must bear with them, my little lady, for your father's sake and mine. I will get rid of them as soon as I can; but you are a woman, you have wit, I tell *you* I dare not offend them. Ouf! the torment of popularity!"

Half a score of women from the markets tramped into the room, without asking leave, ere the words were out of Jonquille's mouth. They were grenadiers or squat helots in size, middle-aged or old, some of them with the bizarre, graphic ugliness peculiar to Frenchwomen, and this rendered more striking by the universal head-dress—the coarse, flamingred cap. Their sleeves were tucked up to their shoulders, exposing their arms, muscular and hairy like men's, or yellow and in sets of bones like bunches of matches. In their hands was the knitting which they had been wont to work at on their seats at the halles, but which they now took daily and nightly to the galleries of the Convention and the

clubs. And on their backs were baskets half full of stale fish, shattered eggs, or withered heads and stalks of flowers and vegetables. They stopped short, and shrieked vociferously on seeing company before them. "Whom have you here, my little son?"

"It is my sister-in-law from the country."

"Oh, we believe it, my pretty boy, my darling citizen; we are so simple. Have you been helping to pillage the farmer-general, my friend? Have you any diamonds and cachmeres to dispose of that you set up a sister-in-law?"

Jonquille flushed with anger, and bit his lips at the insinuation, more offensive to a peasant-born deputy than to a noble; but he preserved his composure as he looked at poor Jacqueline, like a little bird surrounded by kites,—a brave little bird though, which did not drop from its perch or even close its eyes. "If you don't believe me, Mother Green-Apron, Widow Pont de Neuf, La Duchesse, I shall not remain to entertain you who reckon me a liar," Jonquille declared, crossing his arms on his chest.

"Oh! ça, his impudence! and we can drown his speech from the bureau to-day; any day we can get him denounced. Perhaps we have finished as pretty fellows as he."

"Try it," challenged Jonquille, "for I am sure I am heartily tired of speaking for the Nation; only you cannot do without me."

"Hear him! the rogue, the fop. But he is such a pretty darling. No, we could not do without him.

Danton is a giant; and Marat is an honest diable—a friend of the people; and Robespierre is our avocat—our incorruptible avocat—oh! a righteous lawyer; and Philippe Egalité is our prince of Poissardes; but we have not such another monkey as our Commissary here to play off his airs upon us."

"There is St. Just," broke in another voice of the chorus, "but he is a viper, Mother Green-Apron. I miss my foot and fall in the street when there is some firing; St. Just thinks I am shot, but it is all alike to him, he springs on, the beautiful wild beast. What does our Jonquille here do? He turns and lifts me gently in his arms. Ah! I love gratitude," proclaimed the orator, seizing Jonquille's water-jar, tilting it up to her mouth, and swallowing the contents in one draught, as if gratitude were a thirsty grace.

"It was not gratitude," said Jonquille; "it was that I have a mother. Ah! well, my present mood is that I must take my sister to the house of a friend. But I thank you all the same for your goodness, and I invite you to supper to-night, to tell me what is up in the faubourgs."

"Oui-dà, oui-dà, Citizen Commissary, we will come, and bring our friends with us. We have our tables to clear yet, if the Convention will let us. We are in despair for time. Bon jour to you and your sister, who is so like you, and has such little ears, and hands, and feet. But we will not tell your secret in the ear of the cat, only you need not draw wool before our eyes," and the formidable mothers departed as they had entered.

"Will you sup with them, Jonquille Sart?" inquired Jacqueline, coldly and haughtily, as he prepared to go out with her.

"What would you?" responded Jonquille, with a shrug of his shoulders; "shall I save myself and others, or no? These form the bodyguard of the late King's cousin, Philippe Egalité. Roland dare not forbid the flower-women from bursting into his house at all hours, joining the guests at the table of the glorious Madame, and demanding whatever dainty takes their fancy. But what would you again? it is still the women who govern France, as they governed it in the days of the Pompadour, Diane of Poitiers, and the fair Gabrielle."

"Women like your mother hate and loathe such eminence, I can tell you, Jonquille Sart," Jacqueline defended the sex, too proud to make the cause her own.

"Ah! my mother!" exclaimed Jonquille in a different tone; "my mother is as the saints, and so I am sure is my sister,—truly noble," and he took Jacqueline's hand and pressed it; "and I ought to die with shame for censuring women. They have always been good friends to me. You see even these viragos pet me. Our old mother would say it is because I was vowed to the Virgin in my infancy. But how goes the dear old woman? Tell me all about her, Michel's wife; it breaks my heart that I have done things to vex her."

Jonquille engaged a trusty messenger to go with *Dominique*, who was now sleeping in his cart in the

centre of the roar and rush of Paris, as he had slept in the summer meadow at Faye, to a sure place of entertainment for man and beast; while he himself conducted Jacqueline, tranquil in his new-found friendship, through the crowded streets, and, somewhat to her bewilderment, to a great mercer's shop in the thoroughfare of the Rue St. Honoré.

He showed her into the shop through huge bales of valuable cloth and taffetas which encumbered the entrance, and past loaded counters and files of agile shopmen, some of them in the uniform of the National Guard. The men all greeted Jonquille cordially and respectfully as a privileged, distinguished person. "The Citizen Mercer has been looking out for you, Citizen Commissary," remarked one. "The Citoyenne Durand is keeping the dinner," communicated another, as an agreeable piece of information. "What's to do to-day at the Communes?" solicited a third.

Jonquille nodded and exchanged a civil word or two with each.

Beyond the counters and shelves was a dark passage, then a steep narrow stair and a door into the flat above the shop, usually occupied by the tradesman's family. So compressed were these flats, between the shops and the piles of houses above, which entered from the porte cochères, that they were signally noted for low ceilings and obscure lights. Jonquille led Jacqueline up the pitchy gloom of the stair, and opened an invisible door at the top with a private key. The opening of the door shed forth a dim light,

in which a whole family were seen to bound out and fall upon Jonquille. A little plump, rosy man, in a flowered dressing-gown and a white nightcap, pulled the guest into the fuller light of the family room close at hand. A large-boned, harsh-featured, keen-eyed woman in yellow, with a headdress à la Chinoise, saluted him: "Jonquille, my son, what has happened to you? We have not swallowed a crumb lest you should have been ordered away to a post of danger." A fair-haired girl, a vision of beauty, in a gown and train like what Jacqueline was accustomed to wear when she was not in masquerade in a bourgeois cloak, fluttered forward and cooed like a dove, "Thou art come at last, Jonquille." A wild scaramouche of a figure, half child, half girl, with a head of shock black hair, and old patched clothes, a world too small for her ungainly limbs, so like the elder woman's, danced round the Commissary: "Viva! Jonquille, you are not murdered, as Bertrand maintained. Have you brought the puppets, my bachelor? Shall we play them tonight?" Finally, a tall, sullen, sardonic-looking young man afforded a glimpse of a scratch wig and an olive face abiding in the background.

The Citizen Mercer was in the act of saying, "What new glory to the adored country, our Commissary? What new destruction to the tyrants?" when Jonquille extricated himself and introduced Jacqueline: "My estimable friends, may I bespeak your favour for my young sister-in-law, come up on an errand of necessity *to Paris?*"

"Yes, yes, our Commissary, with all our hearts ; anything we can do is done. We are at the service of the Citoyenne," the destroyer of tyrants assured Jacqueline, laying his plump hand on his pigeon breast with dapper grace.

"For any friend of yours, my son, command us," ejaculated the Citoyenne in yellow, fervently. "But,—I did not know you had a sister-in-law."

"Nor I, more than you, Madame, till this morning," admitted Jonquille, with a fit of laughter. "Nevertheless, you see this gracious little person is a seductive reality. Strange things happen in this France in these days. My old brother Michel has married his ci-devant sieur's daughter without leave of me. But I do not complain, I am very glad, if it were only to convince you I am not the only rash man the Revolution has spared."

"Fy, then, why do you say *spared*? There must be marriages ; is it not so ?

"And wedding gifts, and—I do not know what, hé, Madame?" jested Jonquille.

"Why do you two make badinage when the poor young lady faints with fatigue ? Go," objected the soft girlish voice. Then warm, kind little hands took possession of Jacqueline, and drew her to a closet, to put off her mantle ; "for we dine immediately, Madame." It was among the first times Jacqueline had received her mother's title, but the prohibited mark of respect, which Jonquille did not scruple to employ, came naturally to those lips, red like the bell

of the fuchsia flower, and in themselves efflorescent, blossoming over with balmy words and smiles.

Jacqueline was speedily seated at the right hand of Citizen Durand, sharing, along with another pensioner, in the bounty of the Citizen Mercer's family dinner.

The room bore evidence of wealth and comfort, displayed in old chairs and tabourets, their covers worked in satin stitch, and buffet and tables of cherry wood. But the whole was in plain, solid bourgeois style, indicating that Citizen Durand did not aspire to the splendour of a financier. Still there were signs of acquisitions from recent confiscations, which an energetic and diplomatic housewife could well obtain. There was a spinnet, in finely worked dark wood, standing against the green painted wall, with violins lying on it; there were crystal girandoles, containing yellow wax candles, half burnt out, on the high wooden mantelpiece; and a workbox of ivory, on which some pains had been bestowed to efface the *fleur de luce* and the ciphers in the corners, and which, being open, was seen to be full of coarse balls of cotton, sticks of vanille, little bits of soap, and homely sleeves of camisoles and crowns of working caps.

The dinner was ample, but composed of what the Marquis de Lussac would have called gross viands. There was nothing artistic or imaginative in the details; soup of early vegetables, undisguised bouilli, rôti with chestnuts, and a salad, the greatest delicacy on the table. The salad dish, with freshly washed celery, onions, and buttons of turnips, was put down before the Citoyenne

Durand, in the middle of the meal. The Citoyenne gave an example of a great woman's self-denial, by magnanimously declining the rôti, that she might cut, and mix, and pour vinegar and oil on her chef-d'œuvre, which otherwise would not have been cool and tender as the morning, while the rest of the party partook of the pièce de résistance. The salad having been made by the Citoyenne at table, she lay back in her chair, like the mistress of a family whose chief cares for the day are over, and who is permitted to relax to the sweet omelette, the dry fruits, and the Brie cheese.

The host, after tucking a napkin beneath his chin, ate with relish and good humour, all the time delivering the sentiments of a fire-eater. He spoke to Jonquille as if it was the Girondists, with their fatal half-measures and disunion, who were about to reverse the law of nature, and annihilate the Mountain on the raised benches, and not the Mountain that was to fall and crush the Girondists.

The Citoyenne did not meddle with politics. She had enough to do with her dinner and her daughter —her eldest, Félicité, sitting by her future husband, who claimed the rank of Commissary to one of the sections. No one knew but Jonquille might, by his oratory, beauty, bravery, rise to be Generalissimo of an army, like Dumourier, or Governor Commandant, or what not? There was a great deal for a busy woman to do, even in overlooking the dispensing of the fruit, and pouring out of the wine; in bidding

"my daughter" keep down her shoulders, and hold up her head, not drag her mouth with the oranges, or spoil her teeth with the bonbons ; in seeing that Jonquille did not whisper to Félicité more than was proper ; in silencing Bertrand, the olive-complexioned young man with the scratch wig, who occasionally thrust little disagreeable, acrimonious side speeches into the conversation ; and in intently studying Jacqueline. But that was not all. There was Nicole, the soubrette, who waited the table, and clattered the dishes dangerously, in whose discretion and ability the Citoyenne had not the slightest confidence ; and there was Olympe, the Citoyenne's youngest, who was not of an age, as her mother put it politely, to sit at table, but indeed was not in possession of manners and attire to fit her for civilized company. Yet Olympe would not remain altogether in the background ; she would skip here and there like an overgrown monkey ; and when she was not to be descried in some other improper situation, a glimpse of her was to be had hopping in the doorway, snatching the dishes, and skirmishing over them with Nicole.

The whole was like a scene in a theatre to Jacqueline, yet a scene in which she was handed up to the stage and compelled to take a part. The very talk was new to her, consisting of the gossip of Jonquille's section ; the speeches spoken last night in this or that society, and reported in this morning's *Moniteur* ; the army's failure in Holland ; the new hall in the Tuileries or Palace of the Nation ; Marat's arrest and acquittal ;

the last vaudeville ; the first summer excursion to Bagatelle, which Louis Capet's brother had adorned, as it turned out, for the pleasure of the people. The Durands were all kind to Jacqueline, and tried to help her out with an opinion. But the strange faces, the bourgeois customs, as foreign to her as the life at the auberge had been in the last fall, produced a feeling of unreality and uncertainty, a sense of phantasmagoria, intensified and darkened by the suspense and distress of her own mind about what she fondly regarded as her own business—the affairs of Monsieur.

Jonquille had promised to aid Monsieur. That he did not fly to the rescue, that he conducted himself altogether as if he took life easily, and must have his pleasure, was exasperating to Jacqueline. She had just enough self-control and forbearance left to restrain her feelings.

The ordeal was protracted after dinner, when the patriotic citizen returned to his shop and the Citoyenne his wife sat down to her work. It was not to the coarse work seen in her fine workbox, but to the company work of tatting or embroidering ruffles retained for spectacles, for the bench in the Luxembourg gardens, or the fête-days of her friends. She had the laudable intention, at the same time, of amusing Madame Sarte by chatting to her ; above all, she desired to arrive at the solution of the somewhat grave riddle of the commissary's sister-in-law, the reserved, elegant young Madame. Nay, Madame Durand called Jacqueline awkward ; but her practised eye at once detected that

it was the awkwardness of a refined young woman out of her place.

Jonquille did not go out. He reseated Félicité at the spinnet, and, taking a violin, began to accompany her in Pleydell's overtures, and in pieces from that *Richard le Roi* which was sung so disastrously at the dinner of the Guards out at Versailles. Madame Durand was in ecstasies. She was fond of music, and inordinately proud of her daughter's being able to play like the daughter of any ci-devant Marchioness or Duchess now forced to use her accomplishments to earn her daily bread in exile.

The performance was good,—Jonquille's part of it particularly ; the performers were interesting,—even Jacqueline, fretting as she was, acknowledged it. The handsome, gifted young deputy gave himself up to the joyous science, and glowed and looked love to all the world under its inspiration. Félicité played to him, looked up into his violet eyes, and reflected his glow and his love as a clear silver fountain reflects the wooing of the ferns and rushes which bend nearest to its bosom.

Still Jacqueline wearied sorely of the home concert ; and another auditor, the olive-complexioned young man, cast glances of wrath and scorn from a distant seat at the musicians. He also was handsome, and more, he was distinguished-looking, though he was treated as of little moment in the household.

The gipsy girl Olympe, suddenly crouching down at Jacqueline's feet, and resting her chin almost in the

stranger's lap, that she might the better peer at her, said to Jacqueline, "Do you see Bertrand? Does he not look like the diable? He used to sing with Félicité; he does it still when Jonquille is not here. I wonder he cares; I wonder she sings to anybody but my beau Jonquille. Have you been taught to play and sing, Citoyenne? I have not yet. I am not to be taught anything, or be clothed like a Christian, till Félicité is married off and done with; and it is time to marry me. I weary for it, Citoyenne."

At length Félicité stopped, and said, with an air that begged pardon for the interruption, "I have the megrim again, my friend; excuse me."

Jonquille begged a thousand pardons of his love, asked a thousand tender questions regarding her health, and overwhelmed her with compliments and praises. "I have enjoyed my dessert as a feast. We played the last piece divinely. That air was as the gate of paradise. We give pleasure; we do good; all men will be in harmony soon. I could embrace my greatest enemy at this moment." He looked at his watch, and started up. "I depart on my good sister's business."

Jonquille had already made provision for Jacqueline's staying for the present with the Durands, who were eager to keep her, not altogether for the dear love of God and man, but largely for the commissary's sake. Still, as the world goes, Jacqueline had fallen not amongst thieves, but good Samaritans.

When Jonquille was gone, Félicité came in immo-

diately and cooed to Jacqueline, attended to her as Jonquille's sister-in-law, was the most amiable of affianced brides, the most dutiful of daughters, the most hospitable of maiden hostesses. But Jacqueline had a decided impression as to what stopped the concert. It was that Félicité looked round and caught the expression of the grim, distorted face on the distant seat. She felt also that while Félicité attended to her, there was a mute, childlike appeal for consideration and amnesty to the dark, clouded face in the background.

Before supper, Jonquille's step was again heard coming up from the shop,—Jonquille's step and another's; but not Monsieur's,—oh no, not that of Monsieur, at liberty and at the Citizen Mercer's. It was the heavy step of Maître Michel. He had come up with his runaway wife within twelve hours after her arrival in Paris, and after a race and chase backwards and forwards, full of heartburnings and heartbeatings, sufficient to have annihilated a weaker man. And he had come for this purpose at least, to satisfy Jonquille and his friends that his marriage with his master's daughter, which she had asserted so quietly, was no myth, but a reality.

"I did well, Michel," cried Jacqueline, the moment she saw her husband's big figure, with the breath of the woods and fields about its powerful proportions, his tawny head striking against the ceiling of the entresol of the Citizen Mercer,—"I did well when I started for Paris; Monsieur was gone before me, and there

was no time to lose." She did not fly to him for protection, as she had once done, but spoke in self-defence, with a little stubbornness in her tone.

" You are here, Jacqueline, that suffices," replied the deep, longsuffering voice of Michel. " God be praised for your safety!"

" I was not in danger," Jacqueline argued, wilfully; " not real danger; La Sarte had no fear for me."

But La Sarte, in her benevolence, was not like the man the light of whose eyes, the desire of whose youth Jacqueline was, whose passions were twined round her as the fibres of some hearts twine, never to be loosed till the heart itself is unrooted from human hopes and human wishes. But Michel Sart did not tell that to a reluctant woman in so many words.

" I pray you, Michel, how is Madame?"

" Madame is in good health, and amuses herself marvellously."

And Jonquille had good news of Monsieur. The Baron de Faye was not yet consigned to any of the groaning prisons. He had been brought up to give information concerning another aristocrat rather than as an arraigned man. He was dwelling in his own hired house in the Rue Montmartre, like the great apostle Paul, till a certain investigation was concluded. There was no concealing that he was a suspect, and that two of the National Guard were appointed to wait on him and never let him out of their sight. Whether they would offer to dress his hair and black his shoes for him, according to their old callings, would of course

depend upon whether they were men of an accommodating, genial temper, and whether Monsieur refrained from affronting their susceptible feelings. But by the end of the proceedings it was just possible that Monsieur might be allowed to pass into oblivion in the press of weightier matters. If not, interest might be exerted to clear him before he was committed for trial. The chances were not great if all were known, but the tidings were so much better than they might have been, that Jonquille was inclined to congratulate Jacqueline upon them; and he succeeded in inspiring the wife of seventeen with a sanguine hope for the result.

Jacqueline straightway announced her intention of remaining in Paris till the suit was ended, and Jonquille promised to take her and show her the house where her father was lodged, and to get constant reliable information for her. In truth, Maître Michel's wife did not dare for the present to intrude more directly on Monsieur, after whom she had flown so fast and so far.

As for Maître Michel, he would return home without delay, and leave his girlish, high-bred wife among comparative strangers in the terrible Paris of those days. But those days could not be so dark to those who lived through them, else they would never have survived their course. Contemporaries have the advantage of partial blindness,—a decided advantage when lightning flashes are in question. The country work was standing idle at Faye, the old mother would be overwhelmed, Madame would need him. He could trust Jonquille; he could trust Jacqueline, who had

led him his recent dance. Yet Jacqueline reflected, with a shade of bitterness, that it was like Michel,—good, but peasant and bourgeois,—to be ready to die for his master, but to prefer to stand at bay like a faithful mastiff down at the auberge, to remember the country work, his old mother, even Madame, and long to return to the beaten track, to his peaceful home duties.

And Maître Michel went—but only that he might put his house in order for a long absence; that he might collect money for Monsieur's maintenance and defence, should he need to be defended; and make provision for Jacqueline, if the heedless, reckless young woman were deprived of idolized father and slighted husband together,—a sad possibility amidst clouds of grievous disasters. Michel Sart's cares should not crush hoary or humble heads if his true arm could prevent it.

Jacqueline gave Michel her hand as he stood looking yearningly at her, in the prospect of their long parting. “Adieu, Michel; may all go well with you at Faye.” A kind and charitable wish; but it was so calmly and blandly expressed that Jonquille, who contemplated the leave-taking of the young married couple, made his own observations, and recurred to them and turned them over more than once, as a diversion in these shifting days to the Girondist deputy. “Old Michel wedded to the Demoiselle de Faye! Marvelous! But they are little demons of pride, of etiquette, of sweet ice, and of divine rights, the best of these

young aristocrats, as I can testify. Ah! Jonquille, my boy, poor noble Michel, in himself noble, the best kind of nobility, is in the condition of that old American Franklin — he has paid too dear for his whistle."

CHAPTER XI.

LIFE WITH THE DURANDS—AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE—THE LAST OF THE BUREAUX D'ESPRITS—AGAIN AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.



ACQUELINE dwelt with the Durands in the entresol above the shop in the Rue St. Honoré for the rest of the early summer, and thus got a taste of Paris life. Her mind was in some degree calmed about her father; and she experienced a reaction after the blight that had fallen on her young life. At seventeen, most trials can be laid down for a season. Paris, even in the Rue St. Honoré, was a wonderful change to her, and there was a great deal that was attractive to an honest heart in the Durand household, in spite of great prejudices and defects of education. The family were not Spartan in nobility and fidelity of principle, but they were kind on their lower Theban level. The Citizen was a finer edition of little Pepin at Faye—vain, fussy, more timid, as a man of substance, but equally tender-hearted. It would have been a relief to his friends had he not, with the dramatic taste of his nation, acted a part, and, with the vaulting ambition of a Gascon, selected the rôle of a Regulus or a Brutus. In pursuance of his design,

and in defiance of the baptismal register which recorded him Thomas, he had re-christened himself Hercules ; and Citizen Hercules Durand flourished above his shop, and wherever he had occasion to write his name. "I would see the Citoyenne torn by wild horses," he would say ; "I would bind Félicité and Olympe to two stakes ; I would mount the breach and fire the train of gunpowder any day, my friend, that the adored country and future generations of unborn innocents should live free." Happily, Citizen Durand was like many men in the world, a vast deal better than his foaming, frothy creed. In place of abominable cruelties to the wife of his bosom and the children of his loins, he kept his shop diligently, provided for the wants of his household, and afforded its members every pleasure within his reach, if they humoured his speechifying, and feigned to regard him as a Spartan father. And not only so, but, like a good citizen and a charitable man, he actually shared his cup with two unfortunate persons very near the situation of proscrits—to wit, Jacqueline and the young man simply styled Bertrand. Thus the Citizen Hercules committed a flagrant offence against the Constitution he swore to maintain at the point of the pike. But as he was a chicken-hearted man, like the *generality* of braggarts, he occasioned his nerves *considerable* suffering, and this not alone to please the Commissary Jonquille, but to please himself by *surreptitiously* doing a merciful action.

The stretch of good-will was ~~open~~ greater in Madame

Durand, for she had all the trouble of the household ; and, in accordance with the habits of the bourgeois matrons, she made it a hard, sore trouble. Though the Durands were prosperous tradesfolks, and had not yet lost any of their property by the Revolution, the twelve labours of the Citizen's great namesake were as nothing to the three hundred and sixty-five labours a year of Madame Durand, to secure bargains and curtail expenses. Two additional mouths to be fed with soup and salad were a consideration to her.

And then she had an engrossing interest in life, with which certainly one of the strangers on her premises interfered, and possibly both. "If Durand would let patriotism alone, and make a marriage for his daughter, it would better become a father," Madame sighed to herself. She had done her best in the matter at such a disturbed era, for she had entered into no less than two treaties of marriage, one after the other, for Félicité, who was still six months younger than Jacqueline. But though the latest of these afforded a flattering prospect, neither of them had offered a speedy fulfilment of the Citoyenne's object ; and she complained, with vivacity, that if she did not settle Félicité at sixteen years and a half, on the spot, the little monster Olympe, who had not her sister's beauty or docility, and was as tricksome as a jackdaw, would be past training and reclaiming. How was Durand to make up a dot for his youngest daughter, when his shop might be broken into any morning by the sans-culottes the moment the Poissardes imagined Indiennes or droguets were too dear, or had

a whim to sport brocades and velvets at the same cost? Had her couple of children been sons now, she could have made them military officers and statesmen with less pains.

Madame had engaged in her first enterprise on Félicité's account when she was barely fifteen. The intended husband was Bertrand Pommeran, as he was called before surnames were forfeited. He was the son of a farmer-general in the South, and allied to nobles. But to hear Bertrand himself speak of his Greek blood, one would have been led to believe that there was not a family in France of so pure and proud an origin. He was a native of the shores of the Mediterranean, where Greek blood can still be detected flowing in French veins,—the region which sent up to Paris the Deputy Barbaroux, the Antinous of the Republicans. Bertrand had the straight brow and nose, the wonderfully fringed and lidded eyes, the delicately curved lips parting from teeth white as the kernel in a luscious fruit, the sunny olive skin, the finely moulded chin, the neck, the shoulders, the limbs from which dancing fauns have been idealized.

Bertrand's succession was involved in a lawsuit, and when he came up to Paris to settle it, he applied to Citizen Durand to lend him ~~money~~, on the plea of his father's having been a customer at the shop in the Rue St. Honoré for ~~many~~ years. Durand gave ear to the young man, ~~reduced~~ his case fair, and lodged him at his house. In return Bertrand became enamoured, as only a young Frenchman can, and a

Frenchman of Greek extraction, of the charming young girl Félicité Durand.

Madame's insatiable bourgeois ambition for a noble connection induced her to overlook the signs of the times, and Monsieur Bertrand's uncertain finances. The Citizen Durand was undoubtedly, in his way, extremely good-natured, and he was accustomed to leave to his wife the conduct of all the affairs of the family and many of the affairs of the business. The treaty had advanced to a betrothal, when, swoop descended the confiscation of feudal rights and honours, and indeed of all debatable property. The alliance was now at an end—so utterly at an end that Bertrand, in his poverty and slight tenure of existence, lived on with the Durands as tutor to Olympe, when he could catch her, and as escort to Madame Durand and Félicité, when the streets were not safe, and the head of the family was engaged. Bertrand was glad to do this, for he felt that if he were to be massacred tomorrow, there was no need to bid Félicité an eternal farewell to-day.

After him Jonquille Sart, representative for the department of La Mousse, and commissary of Section 12 of Paris, representative too of Republican gifts and powers, entered the field. Madame Durand was charmed to catch a deputy and a commissary; and Citizen Hercules, nominal head of the house (though, as the intelligent reader will have observed, the Citoyenne had always the chief say), was still more enchanted with the prospect of an illustrious demo-

cratic son-in-law. Félicité did not say nay to the handsome, eloquent, musical young commissary, as indeed she would hardly have said nay to the ugliest, most ungainly bête of an old commissary. Only the ci-devant bridegroom, the wretched young Southern, with his Greek, sensuous, passionate soul, which had everything but what stands for a backbone in souls, brimmed over with gall, and scowled on the fresh growth of youthful love, and the new plighting of sacred vows.

But the Citoyenne Durand, as she confided to her friends in moments of depression, was doomed to disappointment and misery. Six months had elapsed since Félicité's second betrothal, and in place of Jonquille's being able to remove her to a suite of garnished apartments in a fashionable quarter, and Madame Durand having her hands free for the breaking in of the colt Olympe, the improvident commissary had not a thousand francs to rub upon another, notwithstanding all the confiscations. There was also a detestable rumour that the Modérés were tottering on their benches, and were about to be expelled from the Convention. Why had Citoyenne Durand been born, or why did not Jonquille Sart belong to the Mountain?

Looking on all sides of the case, then, Madame Durand's patience with Citoyen Bertrand and Citoyenne Jacqueline was most exemplary. A worldly woman she might be—a vulgar schemer, a poor, harsh, keen-visaged, *big-boned* creature, in yellow, and a coiffure à la Chi-

noise; but she had the "live and let live" motto ingrained into her, and was not incapable of generosity.

Félicité Durand was the loveliest, pleasantest young girl Jacqueline had ever seen. Jacqueline herself was spirituelle and gentille with the beauty of an imaginative, sensitive, impulsive nature. Petronille de Croï had a noble beauty, though Madame de Faye asserted it was only a close copy of the original. But the beauty of Félicité was that beauty, quite simple and pure, which would have shone alike at a cottage door, in a bourgeois sitting-room, or in the salon of a château. It was such a beauty as might have been worn by the peasant girl of Falaise, when she won the fierce heart of Robert le Diable,—as might have lingered to old age in the face of Madame de Sevigné,—as might have survived the ravages of time, paint, flour, and base passions, in the face of Ninon de l'Enclos. Félicité had fair tresses, which the French esteem so highly that the women, after the Revolution, adorned their heads with blonde perruques, in defiance of the fact that the women of the guillotine used the shorn hair of the murdered aristocratic maidens,—a hideous contrast to their own brown and wrinkled faces. Félicité's eyes were blue, turquoise blue, limpid blue, sweet, still, and borrowing the shadow of others, as the flower of the myosotis borrows the hue of the passing clouds. She had the pied daisy complexion which is the great attraction of the daughters of Normandy; the soft, dimpled, child-like face, the rounded, lithe figure, the winning gestures and gentle ways, that were all in subtle, exquisite keep-

ing, with an immense fund of sympathy seeming to monopolize the dawning woman.

Félicité was six months younger than Jacqueline, but she was ten years the subordinate of the woman who was married, and had been a true aristocrat. Madame Durand and Félicité, though government had cut down the entire crop of nobles, would still have gaped and prowled about the prostrate remains, even at the risk of themselves forming the next crop to be reaped.

It was the first time that Jacqueline had occupied the vantage-ground with one of her own sex and age who was not a serving woman. And she, it need hardly be said, was not a Petronille de Croï. Madame de Faye had pronounced her daughter, before her sudden treachery, to be gauche and credulous, but at the same time to be the true daughter of a grand dame, grand in self-forgetfulness and in the conferring of favours, while she could at the same time sway her sceptre with the sweet consideration, the noble humility, of a young queen.

Félicité was ignorant and coarse compared to Jacqueline, but there was no natural obtuseness or rudeness about her; she learnt as quickly as she was taught, and her teachableness, like everything else about her, was charming. The key to her character lay in this: "She would pat a dog to make it wag its tail;" and "Beatings of the heart were always necessary to her. She was so happy when her heart beat." The love of conferring pleasure, the passion for daily, hourly, almost momently, self-sacrifice, surrounded Félicité Durand with a halo of gentleness and unselfishness. At least, they

surrounded her with a halo until the observer saw that the truth was tampered with in the process, and that the feelings and inclinations lavished on all, divided and subdivided, were frittered away in a thousand channels, till they lost themselves, like the numerous mouths of a great river, in barren sands. Indeed, this craving for those beatings of the heart, this absolute requirement of a succession of emotions and sensations, painful as well as pleasant, were essential stimulants to an exhaustive waste of the moral faculties. Only the very highest motive can enable man or woman to be all things to all men without falseness and slavishness—the betrayal first of one's self, and secondly of one's fellow.

Jacqueline grew very fond of the beautiful, intelligent Félicité, who adored her. Yet she from the first perceived and disapproved of the encouragement and consolation which Félicité, without any ulterior design, extended to Bertrand.

It was not that Jacqueline had no sympathy with the young man whose presence gave a heightened, picturesque interest, like the Spaniard's sombrero in a picture, to the mercer's house in the thoroughfare in the Rue St. Honoré. The dim resemblance of Bertrand's story to her own had a pathetic thrill for Jacqueline's heart. There were affinities between them which did not exist between her and the Durands,—old trains of thinking, customs, identities even. The young man had not been without chivalrous impulses to leave Félicité to happiness and prosperity with his rival, and to struggle against yielding to base and cruel

revenge. But he found his probation in some respects drawing to a close. He knew far better than any one else in the house that the Mountain and the Girondists were in the death struggle, and he waited the termination of the contest with fiery anticipation. Still he did not forestall the end. He might have denounced the commissary; small accusation was wanted, small prevarication and lies needed to wing the accusation, which by a bold stroke might have insured his own safety. French authorities tell that lovers, husbands, next heirs, were thus continually and successfully denounced by interested persons, in the terrible old days. Bertrand Pommeran did not denounce Jonquille Sart, partly because he knew quite as well as Jonquille that fierce dissensions were rending the republic one and indivisible; partly because Jonquille might have long ago denounced him and cast him out of his refuge, but had refrained. Pitiful as the Citizen Mercer and his wife were of the helpless ruin of the man who was to have been their son-in-law, the commissary would only have had to say, "I will not have it," and the presence of Bertrand would have been got rid of by easy means.

But Jonquille had said nothing of the kind. On the contrary, he had, poor fellow! carried his head high, and announced, "Let Monsieur Bertrand remain. I would not disturb his highness for the universe. I have no fear of Félicité's old love—when she was a child, a baby; and, parbleu! I have no sympathy with messieurs the rats; I do not gnaw a fallen enemy." Bertrand had no sympathy with the rats either. Yet

withal there was no love lost between the two young men.

But there was so much manliness in both her lovers that Félicité vibrated between the two. She rejoiced with Jonquille, she mourned with Bertrand. When her betrothed was in the house, of course she belonged to him ; when he was absent, she was so tender to Bertrand, so watchful of his feelings, so eager to soothe and gratify him with her bouquet on his plate in the morning, her secret preparation of his favourite dish for dinner, her stealthy mending of his threadbare linen, her warbling of his songs, that, though it was all done to comfort the young man, it merely confirmed him in his infatuation.

Jacqueline pondered on the two sides of character as she now watched the complacent Félicité, then the impassioned Bertrand. While the latter was driving Olympe through La Fontaine, in that entresol where everything was done by everybody in public, he was always gazing at Félicité putting aside the porcelain, and going about on household errands ; or he was contriving to sit close to her in the hot afternoons, when the whole house and shop in the Rue St. Honoré smelt more of cabbage stalks than roses. He was content if his hand but rested on her dress,—looking the while like the Sleeping Faun in his drowsy Greek beauty. But when it was Jonquille who sat with Félicité, he was like a panther or a serpent ready to spring from his corner. Jacqueline, thinking of Bertrand alone, asked herself with earnest questioning, whether, if she had gone with

the Lussacs, she would have grown thus doting with weak love, thus mad with blind jealousy? And, pondering the answer, she began to be reconciled to her lot.

It was a French complication of difficulties, and managed à la Française; but Jacqueline, even while it fascinated her, and while she was very fond of soft, amiable Félicité, felt instinctively that she could not have acted so. She blamed Félicité, and was a little indignant on account of both the young men, especially of Jonquille. Then she reproached herself for being harsh and violent, and would say in her heart, "Ah! disobedient, rebellious daughter as I am, guilty of a mésalliance, though with a good man, what right have I to blame the docile, lowly girl who tries to please her parents and console everybody?" Nevertheless the young aristocrat was truer in her intuitions. She would have cut the Gordian knot which Félicité was for ever fumbling to untie.

Olympe was a drôle de corps to Jacqueline. The wild girl, whose freedom extended to doing the marketing for the Citoyenne at the shops in the quarter, chattering with passengers, and withdrawing into the lanes to skip and play ball childishly with girls as wild as herself, was a diversion to Jacqueline, who had been accustomed to see young girls and even mere children disciplined to perfection, and to be as still as statues in the company of their seniors. There was wit in Olympe's sallies, and something irresistibly grotesque in the spectacle of her dancing the infernal gallop with

Jonquille, in her scant sacque and her elf locks tied with a string on the top of her head. But there was something touching, too, in the girl curled up to sleep like a dog on the footcloth, one ear open to distinguish Jonquille's footstep if he was later than usual, and her springing up to meet him when he appeared, with a shrill laugh which broke into a sob and grew hysterical, and had at length to be quieted by angry words from Madame Durand, and by fond murmurs and strokings of the tangled locks from Jonquille. Jonquille petted Olympe, but Bertrand detested her. As might be supposed, she plagued her tutor like an imp, was for ever serving as a marplot, and often betrayed the relations still existing between him and Félicité. "That pie, that pig, that Frédégonde," were not too bad names from tutor to pupil. Notwithstanding, could Bertrand only have guessed it, Olympe favoured his extinguished pretensions. "I wish Félicité had married Bertrand. They would have been a dead match," she said to Jacqueline, with one of her shrewd hits.

"But how, my child?"

"Oh! like oil and vinegar. Bertrand would have treated her as his mistress for fifteen days, and then he would have let her be his slave. That would have been the place for our Félicité—to turn aside his ill humour, and be played with when he was gay. My word, it would have been doing the thing nicely; she would have had no time to serve the world and his wife. Now your brother Jonquille will wish the two to be equals, as in the Convention, or Assembly,—which is

it? And he will not be pleased when she goes flattering all the world and forgetting him, if he is not there to see. Oh! if he had only waited for me, Citoyenne Jacqueline! I could have learned anything had Jonquille, instead of that vulture Bertrand, been my master. I know I am ugly, but I would have been so—— as you do not think," and the tears were in her eyes. "I love Félicité,—hein! everybody loves Félicité, even Bertrand; but I wish she had kept her Bertrand and left Jonquille for me. That would have been a very good market." Olympe, childishly backward in some departments of education, was precociously forward in others.

Jacqueline lived in family with the Durands, that is, she accommodated herself to their rules, sat with them, and went abroad with them as one of themselves.

She did not see much of Madame Durand and Félicité in the mornings. They were then engaged in household work, sometimes even in details connected with the great shop. The Citoyenne Durand especially supplemented all the shopmen. She had not the smallest scruple in showing herself behind the counters, and carrying on the sales when necessary; but more frequently she held consultations with the Citoyen Hercule, inspected bills and invoices, or ran over accounts and ledgers. Madame Durand did not fail in the faculty which makes the Parisian tradesman's wife his partner in business, reduces her to skin and bone, and imparts to her expression a keenness like that of a Red Indian on the trail. Félicité was not allowed to serve in the

shop ; but, in spite of her great prospects and her girlishness and gentleness, she too could not only keep books like an old clerk, but was no mean hand at softly driving a bargain.

Madame Durand thought no shame of going to the shop ; but neither she nor Félicité, in her white camisole, short petticoat, and bonnet de nuit over her lovely blonde head, cared to encounter Jacqueline in their scouring and cooking with Nicole. Jacqueline, of course, had helped in homelier work at the auberge of Faye, but her stories of hôtels and châteaux, receptions in bed, grand toilettes, morning as well as evening, indeed at all hours, had been pressed for and greedily treasured up by them. Generally the commissary came to dinner, and enjoyed a little concert with Félicité afterwards—brief moments snatched from the tremendous cares weighing on a dandy and genius of three-and-twenty. In the afternoon, when Madame Durand was not in the shop, the family received bourgeois visitors. These were very similar to the women of the family, except that none of the young girls was half so pretty as Félicité. The older girls, and their mothers too, looked occasionally at Jacqueline and Bertrand, in their perceptible “finish and elegance,” with more hostile eyes than Madame Durand, and spouted for their benefit sentences from the *Moniteur*, approaching to the revolutionary acumen of Citoyen Hercule, at that moment wielding his ell-wand, alike as a father, a senator, and a slayer of kings.

Jacqueline liked well to walk abroad in that wonderful

dingy Paris, brilliant and beautiful for all its dinginess, in this month of May, with rainbow tints and aureoles from its Champs Elysées and gardens, and giant shadows from its old black houses. She did not know that she was walking over a crater on the eve of cracking and spouting out fresh volumes of sulphureous smoke, and jets of consuming fire. She had a little fluttering fear that she might meet Monsieur and his guard at a corner; but there was as much bliss as agony in the supposition, to the guilty, loving daughter. Jonquille did not entertain his betrothed with the convulsions of the Convention. These certainly made him hurried and brusque sometimes; but he was always very penitent for any want of gallantry at the next meeting. As for Durand, he was a patriotic loud-quacking goose, or gobbling turkeycock, who, while proclaiming himself eager to burn and slay all insurgents, winked his eyes hard, and would not see disasters looming over him, till they descended with a crash, threatening to crush him in their ruin.

Jacqueline and Félicité often walked abroad together. They needed no chaperonage from Madame Durand, since Jacqueline was a married woman. In their innocence and ignorance and perfect fearlessness they felt marvellously safe,—looking quaint enough in their muslins, worn tight and girdled below the bosom, the long skirts thrown over one arm, a shawl loosely crossed in graceful folds round them, and a little mob cap as often as a hat on their heads. In another year, figures like theirs would have discarded the shawl, bared their

arms to the shoulders, had their gowns made open, like togas, and exposed their bare feet in sandals, on the model of ancient sculptures.

The two young women looked round them and gossiped, much like the other young women of the times. They stared at the masses of building in the Isle de Paris, stood on the Pont Neuf, and watched the artisans in the barges on the Seine, busy manufacturing artillery ; they enjoyed the new line of shops opening out of Egalité's old Palais Royal ; they delighted in the round orange trees of the gardens of the Tuileries, now the National Palace ; and they glanced at the plaster casts of the old Roman Brutus, elevated above their heads at every commanding point. They often stood aside in doorways to let processions of women pass—women different from those in the mob of La Maille, and the appeased, exulting ranks that stormed the grocers' shops, —mature women, with “serpent locks” more dishevelled than young Olympe Durand's wind-blown tangles,—Mégeres, as the Modérés named them, furies of whom the devil had got entire possession. They saw Marat, the disciple of the cellars, the Diogenes bred by despotism and squalor, carried shoulder high from his acquittal, an oak crown on the head usually encircled with a filthy cloth. But neither they, nor anybody else, saw then the fair young woman,—that later unhappy Pucelle who had sat at the feet of Socrates, and was to bear the knife, and not the lily banner,—making her way from sea-girt Normandy through the summer green of orchards and the dust of high roads

to meet Marat face to face. Jacqueline and Félicité only remarked how differently Citizen Jonquille would have looked in Marat's place,—Jonquille like the soaring skylark, the bird of the morning; Marat like the bat, the creature night disgorges from her gloom. But eyes long used to darkness cannot endure light. The tenants of cellars and garrets, with their festering wrongs, would not have honoured a brave, hasty, blundering young patriot-republican who could yet love and pity all mankind; so they chaired the harsh, mean hater of all above the loathsome dregs of the life he had led, and which made him the self-constituted "Friend of the People."

From such sights, at which men now pause in astonishment and fear, Jacqueline and Félicité turned away, forgetting them in a moment. They chattered of the scenes of "Armida," advertised for that night at the French Academy of Music, and laughed at the immense number of spectacles which of a sudden appeared in the streets, as if the fantastic citizens, the younger and more unlikely subjects especially, had been simultaneously struck with partial blindness.

Though they whispered her name with awe and grief, these girls knew only at a distance, and through a cloud of dazzling, stupifying events, of the royal widow in the Temple, who in these summer days sat mending her rags of widow's weeds. Her son had been taken from her. She had stood two hours before the boy, guarding him with her feeble woman's arms, before she would give up the son of a race of

kings to be an apprentice to the shoemaker, Simon. Instead of the noble park of Versailles and the fairy gardens of the little Trianon, her summer walk was on the platform of the Temple, where sometimes, after hours of watching, she would get a passing glimpse of her boy through slits in the boarding, as he passed along the platform of the neighbouring tower.

In the end of May, Jonquille Sart obtained admission for his friends to a reception held by Madame Desmoulins. It was in a vast old hôtel—one of those square hôtels built round a court, which in Madame de Sevigné's time were only fully furnished by waggon loads of household goods, brought along with the quality from their country residences ; and when the occupying family was small, though of the highest rank, these mansions were economically let out in suites of lodgings. The most of these hôtels were now the property of the Nation, and one of the grandest was occupied by Camille Desmoulins, the stuttering orator of the Cordeliers, who could relish the jest which entitled him Solicitor-General of the Lamp, or the French Tyburn. Everybody knows that the Cordelier Club, with their giant Danton, and their jester Desmoulins, were not of the set to which Jonquille Sart belonged. But Camille Desmoulins had a beautiful wife, Lucille, whom he, a profligate, daring, unscrupulous man, had learnt to love, as John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, loved his Queen Sarah. But Lucille was more generous than Sarah Jennings. She drew up the lower soul of her husband by the cords of love, and even endowed

him with a corner of the martyr's mantle to screen his sins, before he died, kissing a lock of her hair, and calling on the name of Lucille.

Young Madame Desmoulins was naturally well affected to all that was gracious in human nature. So when, as a leader of the Paris of the day, she happened to make the acquaintance of the Commissary and Deputy Jonquille Sart, she took a fancy to him and insisted on patronizing him. And skilfully she bore down all the opposition which the Solicitor-General of the Lamp, well assured of her regard, and tempted to risk his head to win her approval, thought fit to institute.

Madame Desmoulins sent cards to Jonquille and his relations and dear friends at the Rue St. Honoré, inviting them to her réunion as to an ordinary assembly ; and Jonquille took Félicité and Jacqueline, both proud and curious to witness the scene.

Jonquille came for his ladies in proper costume of pumps, silk stockings, and double vest, ignoring the blood which haunted his imagination. He arrived so early that the women had not quite settled an important question as to a point in costume. It had, of course, no reference to crapes and gauzes, for the ci-devant Demoiselle de Faye, rapidly developing in her family relations, was already furnished with her first ball costume by her dear brother-in-law, Jonquille Sart, and had freely accepted the gift. The question was whether it was not too late in the day for Félicité to wear a little model of the demolished Bastille and its eight towers and double ditches about her round white

throat? The aristocrate-philosophe-republicaine Jacqueline shrank from the levity of the ornament, as she would have shrunk still farther from another and ghastlier one, not yet come into use,—a little gold guillotine.

A contretemps occurred before the party left. The unlucky Bertrand was of course not of the number, and was contemplating the setting out of these pleasure-seekers of 1793 from the height of folded arms and the depth of French chagrin. It seemed as if he would, before their return, certainly fling himself into the Seine, or give himself up to the populace as a royalist; which in fact would be much the same thing, only accomplished with greater éclat.

Olympe, who jumped round Félicité and Jacqueline more like a child of six than a girl of thirteen, had her black eyes diverted from the splendour of her attire by her glance falling on a little basket of early cherries which had just been placed on the buffet. She made a spring at the prize, and examined a morsel of paper twisted round the handle of the basket. "Voilà!" she exclaimed, without a moment's pause, "it is for you, my old man," and danced up with the basket to Jonquille.

Jonquille received the tribute with a laugh. "Is it that I look thirsty? I am not going to sing to-night; there will be no time for anything but conversation;" and he kept sending merry, loving looks to Félicité, who smiled back to him, but blushed more than was necessary.

Jonquille opened out the twisted paper, and his face changed. "This is not for me. Why did you say so, cocotte?"

"It must be for you," persisted Olympe, "for it is the handwriting of Félicité. I should know it, when she sets my copies every time Bertrand is not here."

"Not at all, my little friend," Jonquille said, recovering his dignity. "Permit me, Monsieur, to present the basket and its contents to their true owner," and he held it out to Bertrand.

Bertrand gave a snarl rather than a smile, grew greener than ever, and scarcely touched the bone of contention.

"Hi ! hi ! hi !" giggled Olympe at the discomfited, angry face.

"Be quiet, hyena," screamed Madame Durand, who loved her youngest in her own way, though her pride lay in Félicité.

"You are not angry with me, Jonquille?" pleaded Félicité, clasping her lover's reluctant arm, and raising her child's eyes to his clouded face, after they had descended and were walking through the shop. "That poor Southern pines even in our summer. He loves not our ragouts and soups. You do not grudge him the fruit?"

"I grudge a poor fellow fruit!" protested Jonquille with strong contempt. "I tell you no. But there must be no more relentings and solacings, or I will be a brute.—I know it. You understand, Félicité?

Do not attempt to make a fool of either him or me, if you do not wish to destroy both."

"Oh! my heart, Jonquille, can you think I seek to make a fool of you? If so, you may go on to say I will destroy you; but I would rather you killed me, my friend, than that you said such words to me."

Félicité was as innocent as her cherries of all but inveterate good nature, and a talent for childish intrigue. Her earnest, piteous defence would have taken by storm a stouter-hearted antagonist than Jonquille Sart. In fine, she was a silly, tender dove, and he forgave her on the spot, and even went so far as to take the fault on himself, in the fashion of generous men and women. "My hairs are all rubbed the wrong way, my sister," he confessed to Jacqueline, as they walked along the streets, pointed at and followed by the gamins, as if there were no greater sights. "I am as a hedgehog, and I will tell you why. I have just seen a citizen from Faye, who always made me regard the world as Hades, of which Faye was the Infernus, and he the Pluto bestowing on me his jaundiced eyes. When I was a mere fly of a child, I always, when in the shadow of his society, believed all the other flies to be scorpions stinging me, and then became a scorpion myself, and stung them in self-defence. If there is a man in the world whose abandoned, melancholy air tempts me to think the great Revolution a colossus of horrible error and crime, and all my friends fickle and false traitors and traitresses, it is that citizen butcher Sylvain."

"How! is he here? What has brought that Sylvain

to Paris?" asked Jacqueline, with a gasp, notwithstanding that she was trained to control the expression of her feelings.

"I do not know, my sister. Every citizen is free to come and go as he likes. But hold! I remember, he said it was his trade, something in his way going to be soon, and he depended on me recommending him, if I did not require his good services first. I cannot tell what the dog means; he is no friend of mine, and I have no concern in his business. Only that old woman of ours, the dear old mother, endured him as she endures every one. He had a bad mother, who quitted him when he was a child as peasant mothers rarely quit their children. Yet the slaughterer loved her dearly, bad as she was; and our mother has told me that the horrid fellow would have been as great in love and trust as in hate and scorn, if his good angel had but got her way. Perhaps, who knows? we all have our sins to answer for, without the excuse of the butcher," Jonquille ended, sadly.

The bureaux of the courtly pedants — the Rambouilletts, where Condé had strode in his gilded spurs and plumed beaver, where Corneille had declaimed in the high-flown language of the Court of the English Elizabeth and her Sidney and Raleigh, where the great Cardinal had aired his square hat and scarlet stockings, and knit his brows at the phenomenon of absurd, lofty-minded, incorruptible women,—had long since vanished. So had the wicked circle of the nun Tinçou, with her outraged vows and blasted reputation,—the blackest

figure in such scenes. So had the compeers of the *Femme de chambre* and the *Dame de compagnie*, who had presumed to rival their mistresses, and wile away accomplished abbés and uxorious old dukes to receptions in little closets without footcloths and fires, where you may rely upon it the genii of the place were specially lively and racy to counterbalance the bare planks and the nipping cold.

There were still dames d'esprit fitter representatives of the dead than the beautiful heroic hostess Lucille Desmoulins; but these had taken fright at the fulfilment of some of their predictions, the realization of some of their hopes, and were either gone from Paris or rapidly going. Staid Madame Neckar's impulsive, ambitious daughter Germaine de Staël, with her prominent brow, and her aspirations to Corinne's laurels in the capital of Italy and the world, had retired to Copet. Madame de Genlis, so much meaner, more restless in her vanity, and more false than Germaine, yet one who triumphed over her rival in her day as the world goes, whom her husband sneered at as Madame Livre, and Philippe Egalité trusted as a feminine Chesterfield, had also fled in her mingled shrewdness and affectation to Switzerland.

The salon where Madame Desmoulins presided was unchanged, retaining its old, almost fantastic chasteness and splendour. The walls, with wreaths of fruits and flowers in fresco, were white as snow; the mirrors, in frosted silver; the covers of the furniture, in white velvet; the light from lamps of alabaster. It was the

company that was different from the old grand dames and seigneurs, even from the philosophers and prophetesses of the bureaucratie. Some of the women had been made truer and more tender by their rough contact with sore tribulation, but more of them had been made incurable butterflies ; while the men were no longer petit-maîtres and schoolmasters, but were really men, where they had not grown into demons.

There was enough of variety still. Aristocratic names were to be heard when aristocratic creeds were torn to tatters ; for example, there was the old Duchess de Coigny, who had hated Marie Antoinette with a deadly hatred, but who now stood in her proper person and looked down on her associates.

The painter David was there, with his twisted face, and his mind, yet more distorted, running on his painting of Brutus, while a new congenial subject awaited his pencil. There was big, swaggering Danton, with his huge relentless projects, and his personal bonhomie, like some ill-proportioned, genial, terrible Thor or Odin. There was the frivolous, airy, humming-bird Creole, Madame de Beauharnais, in her white dress à la sauvage, and her pomegranate flowers à la St. Pierre's Virginie, awaiting to captivate the stiff, silent, beautiful faced young man, who claimed the bridge of Lodi, crossed the heights of the Simplon, and was only stopped by the thin scarlet line at Waterloo. Greater soldier he than Dumourier, or Kellerman, or Turenne, or Villars ; and at last classing himself, and being classed by his fellow-men, with Julius Cæsar and Alexander,

whose Caliphurnias and Roxalanas may have been no wiser or nobler than Josephine, since the people's idols, be they generals or imperators, have still the head of gold, and the feet of mingled iron and clay. Madame de Condorcet was there too, thoughtful and spirituelle, and, like the divine Emilie, great in severe science, but fortunate in having for her master in all science Monsieur de Condorcet, destined yet to earn a bit of bread by painting the portraits of the brigand chiefs of the Mountain. But one statelier, simpler divinity was missing. Madame Roland, likened to Rousseau's Julie, was absent, because the late minister of war was in all things a Spartan husband, jealous and exacting, forbidding society and female friends, and demanding constant attendance and hard work from his famous wife.

There was no want of notabilities, and Jonquille Sart pointed them out, and was even occasionally betrayed into a vehement opinion. "Danton, and Desmoulins, and Fabre d'Eglantine, and the rest of them, are dragging us down by their weight and speed. They are great in the want of hesitation, though the mother of one of them, Camille l'Outremier, would be astonished to hear that fact. The world always loves them, the men who do not doubt, either in faith or in scepticism. They are such strong, clear fellows, affording such a solid, steady pillar for their followers to lean upon. They are the men to rally round, they. What are we but poor, left-behind drags to hold these men back? And some day it will be they who will pull

us down, and trample us under foot in their devil's dance of triumph and ruin."

"No, no," denied Félicité, with her flattering faith and admiration. "You are a great deal handsomer and cleverer than any of them, my commissary; they can never defeat you."

Of a truth there was no want of notabilities, and they had the peculiar distinction which attended on the guests of the Irish dinner-table where Sir Jonah Barrington feasted. Had one of the soothsayers to whom enlightened Paris, having got rid of all other oracles, was now trooping, stood on the threshold, he might have seen nine-tenths of the men and women headless, and on the fine humming-bird head of one of the women an imperial crown.

There was no opening for anything but conversation; yet the crowd was too numerous, the elements too chaotic, for the old French circle. The company broke up into the parvenu form of cliques, and the still lower form of couples whispering behind the women's great green fans. Jacqueline was walking about, making acquaintance by sight with the celebrities of the day, or neglecting them, to criticise, like a clever girl of seventeen, the knots of ribands at the men's knees, the high Indian bows and clubs of hair beginning to rise,—not à l'Indienne, however, but à l'Andromaque, or à l'Agrippine,—on the crowns of the women's heads. While so engaged she was attracted by the laughing conversation of Madame Desmoulins *with* one in the costume of an old savant who sat in

an out-of-the-way corner, and did not traverse the throng. There was something in the air of this man, with his dark green coat embroidered with light green lace, his yellow waistcoat and green breeches, his flaxen wig and his spectacles, which struck her as if she had seen him before. She certainly did not know the dress, and the face was turned away from her. Still, she had a startled conviction that the blithe laugh from her handsome hostess, then looking towards her, bore reference to her. She had not time to question the conviction, when Madame Desmoulins rose quickly, advanced towards Jacqueline, and led her a little aside. "I have the honour to present one of my guests to a member of the National Institute of France who has requested that distinction," said Madame Desmoulins, with a little lingering tinkle of laughter in her tones, and moving away the moment she had acquitted herself of the commission.

The gentleman rose, took Jacqueline's hand, bowed over it, turned his back to the company as he did so, and said, "Do not cry out, my cousin; I am grieved that I cannot meet you with a warmer greeting."

It was the handsome prominent chin and drooping mouth of Achille de Faye, who had ventured into the jaws of death,—an impostor in the house of one of the foremost Cordeliers.

CHAPTER XII.

BLOOD THICKER THAN WATER—THE MORALITY OF THE PLANKS
—SAVE WHO CAN.



ACQUELINE'S heart beat violently, and the room swam. The animated voices round her, and the music in the ante-room, sounded faint and far away; but she neither swooned nor screamed for the Chevalier's sake.

He was her cousin, and had been her betrothed from the cradle; and now they were husband and wife of another woman and man. But he was her kinsman still. If blood was thicker than water at any time, it was so at this period. The strangeness and suddenness of the encounter, when she thought him an émigré in England, took away her breath. The romance of his disguise and danger, and the temptation to appeal to him in behalf of her father, to cling to him as the representative of her family and order, were strong upon her at the first moment. But equally strong, nay, impressing her with a strange vividness of comprehension, was the conviction that the Achille de Faye who stood before her, high-bred, saucy, and daring in *his slight masque*, was another Achille from the young

lover to whom she sang in the Ravine, and whom she joyously tripped down to meet at the door of the Tour, as he issued from the great berline of the Marquis de Lussac. Achille the chivalrous lover and bridegroom was more truly dead and buried than the grand Dame of the Tour, when she entered her daughter's home in the character of a beggar.

It could not have been otherwise, unless Jacqueline had been as light of mind and as warped from her old high-hearted fidelity, had become as specious and corrupt, as much of a parasite and a courtier, as any weak and worthless Chevalier. Faith once destroyed is destroyed for ever, unless in a heart itself intrinsically faithless. Love may suffer long and be kind; but faith, once slain, asks no more than a decent burial. Love may weep tenderly over the green grave, and new plants of grace may spring from the dust of the sepulchre; but of the dead and buried faith there is no resurrection.

Jacqueline comprehended this law as every good, honest, noble woman, however romantic and simple, must comprehend it. The figure of Michel Sart the registrar, great, gentle Michel, never stood nearer his wife than now, when she had no fear for herself, but only feared for her lost lover, Petronille de Croï's husband, her cousin Achille.

"Why have you ventured back, Achille? How can you come here in such peril?"

"There is no peril at all, Jacqueline. I am safer looking about me here, than anywhere else in this

Shrove-Tuesday city. The best joke is that even Madame Desmoulins does not know me, further than in discovering that I am not a member of the Institute, accustomed to mumble papers on astronomy and geometry. I had the face to tell her you were an old friend of mine, and to ask her to contrive that I should speak with you. She is a jewel for a villain's wife, and women are not hard on poor dogs like me, Jacqueline," he insinuated, wistfully.

"My friends will seek for me," Jacqueline hesitated, on his account, and not on her own.

But while they were speaking, Madame Desmoulins had arranged for them. She was a mistress of social difficulties, as generous, happy women are more than any others. She had borne down swiftly on the wondering Félicité and Jonquille, assured them all was right, taken them under her wing, that they might not interrupt what she was pleased to consider an affair of the heart of her gallant, mysterious savant. It might be the meeting of husband and wife forced apart by this earthquake, or brother and sister, fain to make signs to each other, and exchange a word of confidence and affection at a soirée.

The Chevalier pointed out to Jacqueline the actress who, accustomed to conspiracies and arrests, to ruses and embuscades on the stage, became hardened to them in real life, and defied the Convention, by carrying him about in her train. He explained how the green-room afforded him endless disguises. When pressed he could even take a rôle in the company. Not one of his

class, he said, had been seized beyond the stage seats formerly provided for their accommodation, and which had afforded facility for insolent comments on the play, and conversation with the actors and actresses in the middle of their parts. He hinted that he had crossed over to France on business connected with Monsieur de Lussac's funds, without knowing that Monsieur de Faye was in trouble, or that he had been brought up to the capital and detained there. But since coming to Paris he had heard of these particulars, and even of Jacqueline's arrival and place of residence; for the aristocrats, in their concealments and disguises, had their spies for self-preservation as well as the republicans. He had schemed to meet Jacqueline and exchange confidences with her, and had at last succeeded.

She did not see how their mutual confidences could benefit Monsieur. Achille's resources were all needed for himself, and, notwithstanding his ease and boldness, she trembled for him where she sat. Nevertheless, it was fit and proper that the Chevalier should propose to aid his uncle, Monsieur, the head of his house; and she was anxious to avail herself of every aid. She inquired for Madame Achille de Faye and the Lussacs with no more than a little tremor; and told him, with a sedate sweetness, what she thought regarding her father's safety.

Achille answered her with a carelessness which approached to bravado, while he was at once baffled and attracted by her bearing. This was certainly no

longer the crushed little girl whom he had relinquished at Faye. The desperate degradation which had made her the wife of the registrar, the aubergiste's son, had passed over her and done her no harm. Achille disdainfully ignored the existence of the Sarts; but he now recognised as a heroine the young woman who sat beside him controlling all traces of emotion, and looking up in his face with her brown-grey eyes, so intensely bright, and yet so pure, clear, and fearless. His heart now yearned for her in the smoke and din of the conflict, as his own cousin Jacqueline, once his betrothed. It was true, as he told her, that they two seemed thrown together and left alone to struggle for each other, and for Monsieur. Now that he was here he would not forsake his kindred, he would remain, and escape or die with them. It was a brave and manly spirit which prompted the words, and Achille in speaking them looked brave and manly. He was handsomer in the flaxen perruque and savant's coat than he had ever been in his lovelocks and redingot. And he needed to look brave, for he was hanging on the edge of the abyss, with Danton's brutal force and Desmoulins' steeled irony at the bottom; while the shrieking slaughterers were ready to wrest away his hold. Yet his eyes might have been opened, he might have been forgiven, cleansed, ennobled, had he but trodden in the steps of truth and nobleness.

"But, pardon, my cousin," objected Jacqueline. "I am under the guardianship of my brother-in-law, Jon quille Sart, the deputy and commissary, and he is

interested for Monsieur." As she said this she looked like a grand dame, with an open forehead and a true lip, abiding by her choice and standing up for her peasant relations, each of whom was now, even as much as he was, her friend.

"Jacqueline, we are left alone. All the world is in arms. Let us make common cause and fight the battle till death together," he urged, warmly. Already his fickle heart was satiated with the fruit of his own devices—his worldliness, and appreciation of a worldly nature. It now turned back to his unworldly cousin Jacqueline, with her wealth of tenderness and devotion, seeking refreshment at the cool, fresh spring, and thirsting for a draught of the rich, fertilizing water.

"Pardon again, my cousin. What would Madame your wife say if we detained her husband?" said Jacqueline, repulsing him gently, but with coldness in her voice.

"Don't waste your sensibility upon Madame," exclaimed the Chevalier, hotly; "she is an excellent wife! Bless me! so excellent, she not only takes care of my affairs, but takes care of herself into the bargain, and saves me all trouble. She objected to my coming here; but when she found that it must be so, if the funds of the Marquis were not to be diminished beyond bearing, she consented like an angel, furnished me with the money,—not too much,—and I doubt not she is now taking her airing in Hyde Park every day, and visiting her delighted friends, the English noblesse, like another angel. Oh! she is an excellent wife, who

gives me no trouble. But she is my wife in England, who, it is very probable, will soon be my widow. But what of that? She has been a widow before; she will survive another accident; perhaps find an English match,—and welcome. But you are my cherished little cousin, Monsieur's daughter, my sister, my mistress,—all to me now in this horrid, convulsed Paris, where there is but a step between a man and the pike. Think of it; think of it, my darling."

"I have thought of it, my Chevalier," answered Jacqueline in a voice like a bell, "and it is because I have done so that I remain here hand in hand with Jonquille Sart, brother of my man."

"*Sacré cœur!*" he swore, and threw himself back sullenly against the wall. There was death to his treacherous hopes in the ringing accents, and especially in the homely phrase which Jacqueline purposely used. He grew pale with an enraged and craven paleness. "You ought to have valued my proposal more highly, Madame," he observed, reproachfully and wrathfully, as Jonquille Sart at last drew near them, "for I have met again to-day that monster from Faye, and I believe the man is my bad fate, my malignant star."

Sylvain again! Jacqueline's flesh crept at the second warning, the repeated citation of the butcher. Just then Jonquille beckoned to her. As she rose hastily, a sudden movement of the crowd in the gay, perfumed volcano of a salon swept her out of sight and sound of the Chevalier's adieus, and consigned her once more to her companions, Jonquille and Félicité,—the first

discreet and generous, the second childishly engrossed with the undreamt-of magnificence. "Do not look at me with great eyes, my sister," Jonquille said reassuringly to Jacqueline; "I am blind, I have been blind to a good deal among my friends, as well as my opponents, past and present, perhaps too much and too long, but not to you. I have seen another man from Faye,—rest tranquil, my sister, it is Ambrose the baker,—in the crowd at one of the doors. 'Holà! Ambrose!' I greet him among the fine folk. 'Bon jour, Ambrose; good hope to your trade, my boy!' I have a tender heart to all the people of Faye, even to Sylvain," he declared, meaningly. "I love little Faye, rural Faye-aux-Jonquilles. How does it look now, think you, among its vine-leaves and roses? But I should like to see and to smell the yellow jonquilles, my godmothers, again in their season. Shall we do so, my Félicité? Ah! there are many more voices than yours, voices roaring like the waves of the sea, to speak in answer. But it is all the same: I do not know how I could love the big France without loving the old mother, and the little mistress, and the Faye-aux-Jonquilles first."

That night there was a jovial supper behind the scenes at the Odéon. It was attended by the actors and proprietors of the Théâtre Français. The wearers of the buskin suffered less from the Revolution than any other class. Churches were closed preparatory to being abolished. Even hackney coaches were shunned as suggesting notions of gentility. But the theatres were

nightly crowded by loudly applauding audiences. On the planks—the only planks in Paris which were not slippery with blood—appeared pasteboard kings and queens, well received and willing to play their best to win the “It is well—there!” and the uproarious claquet of their sister sovereigns the Tricoteuses, overflowing the pit, and climbing without dispute into the boxes.

At the supper in the green-room of the Odéon sat young Talma in the royal robes of Artaxerxes, and young Mademoiselle Mars with the diadem of Bérénice on her brow. She had yet to teach the world to weep over the shame of Mademoiselle Belleisle. Behind the scenes kings and queens not only went unquestioned, but were the more welcome, as novelties reckoned too expensive elsewhere. And besides the young folks’ king and queen there were the old people’s favourites,—Clairon, whom Voltaire instructed in cadenced rhyme; merry Mademoiselle Contat, inimitable as Dorine or Toinette, whom Molière might have numbered in his own troop, and recognised as his true daughter. Men and women they all were, who feared little besides the “Down, down!” “To the door, to the door!” of an impatient house, and desired most the “Again! again!” of an encore. Among them were the Chevalier’s friend, and the Chevalier,—not so brave and light-hearted as he should have been for a man whose disguise and enterprise in the Hôtel of the Desmoulins, that fortress of the enemy, had been described by his protectress as a grand success.

The ices, the capillaires the wines—Volnay, Pomard,

Beaune, and Windmill—flew round and round, and Artaxerxes and Bérénice themselves condescended to join in the Bohemian—

“ Will drink who will, lariette ;
Will pay who can, larira.”

But the ungrateful guest at this the best supplied, most secure table in Paris, waxed only more restless and more sombre.

“ What is it, my friend ?” questioned his protectress. “ Must you go to the pawnbroker for a decent suit ? or have you been at the gaming-table to try the roulette and lose the last penny ? or are you menaced with the croque-mort ?”

“ Not that, but worse,” growled Achille ; “ what do I care for the croque-mort ? But a man who always recalls to me the toad, the snake, has crossed my path.”

“ Holy saints !” ejaculated the light-hearted votary of Melpomene, still susceptible to one superstition, which caused her to cross herself emphatically, forgetting that the efficacy of the cross was now denied.

“ There, lose no time ; it is the voice of Nature, Divine Nature, the only Divinity we have left to us. You cannot escape from it. What says the proverb,—‘ Chase away Nature, she returns at a gallop.’ There is that passport I talked about for Madame de la Tour Landrey’s brother ; use it this very night—the brother has not come to hand ; it carries you beyond the nearest barrier with Madame. Théophile here knows

most of the soldiers on guard. He cultivates their acquaintance as a precaution ; besides, he is studying a military part in the vaudeville for the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and must acquire the most correct oaths and songs. Théophile will see you to the barrier, where you will meet Madame. For the love of me I conjure you, my soul, lose no time.

“ But, diable ! I have friends in this detestable Paris, my charming guardian,” objected the Chevalier, with languor, notwithstanding that his nervousness increased, and glittered in his long-shaped eyes, and burst out in cold sweat upon his high brow.

“ What friends ? ” pursued the actress, striking her breast in her excitement. “ What can you do for your friends if the croque-mort come for you ? Go ! you can get more friends. There are many dramas and many characters on the stage of life, but for each of us there is only one croque-mort. Are these friends worth all the others, and life to boot, when you tell me that you have seen your mortal enemy ? —and, heaven ! at what a time ! ”

“ Apparently not, Madame,” answered the Chevalier, hoarsely. “ They hold me and my devotion lightly enough, in sooth ! We are rejected on account of old, brutal, authorized ties.”

“ Then fly, my friend, while you have the power. You hesitate still ? I tell you frankly, I cannot accord you longer shelter, after the man who makes you feel worse than the croque-mort has crossed your path. I have been faithful to our little friendship, but I have

my own safety to care for. The ill luck may be infectious ; who knows ? Save himself who can, Monsieur," she added, evidently drawing away from him.

Save who can. Yes, thought the Chevalier. And it was late to seek another lodging in hostile Paris. Jacqueline de Faye should yet know what she had lost. He would be free from the odour of that butcher he so hated, and shrank from with sickening disgust. So that night he availed himself of the passport of his importunate hostess ; before midnight he had passed the barrier ; within a week he was out of France.

But if there were stars and crossings and blightings, or any power beyond the unceasing contest between good and evil, in a man's destiny, it did not manifest itself in brute force. If Sylvain's star crossed and blighted the Chevalier's, it was not that the boor's foot of Sylvain spurned the Chevalier's haughty breast, or that his brawny arm gripped sternly the Chevalier's rigid throat. Sylvain's butcher's axe did not hack the Chevalier's quivering limbs ; Sylvain's " Ho ! ho !" was not the last sound that mingled with the Chevalier's gurgling life-blood and rattling life-breath. The fatal star to the Chevalier was but his fiery sense of Jacqueline Sart's rejection of his lawless claims, relieved against the lowering shadow of his slavish abhorrence of the mocking leer of Sylvain.

Achille escaped and settled in England, to saunter and sneer there, to dice and brawl, to be more and more separated from his heartless wife, until " chambering and wantonness " ceased even to assume a stately,

courteous disguise. His conscience clamoured against him throughout his wretched lifetime. Although he had offered his single arm and Jacqueline had put it from her, although he might not have saved them, and was not called on to die with them, yet he felt at length, in his corrupted, cynical heart, that better had he died for his brethren, or died with them, than fled as he did from danger to condemnation.

CHAPTER XIII.

DIANE LIGNY—MICHEL AND BABETTE.

ARIS, the heart of France, was beating with convulsive throbs in these first weeks of June. New acts of the tragedy were opening. There were new ringings of the tocsin and beatings of the drum, new marchings and countermarchings of thousands of armed men. Many citizens had been arrested, and not a few had fled. But Santerre and Samson, and the provincial Sylvain, with their apprentices, were yet picking at lobsters, or pulling at glasses of gooseberry water round the street fountains.

Down at Faye the country was dry baked, and bereft and forlorn, though the roses were hanging in clusters up at the Tour. This year there was no harvesting of roses in anticipation of the feast of St. John—no bleaching of white coverlets to be hung out at the village windows, and to be finely set off with nosegays of roses to grace the procession of the young girls. France had taken to less peaceful processions. The hiring market had dwindled away to little better than a sham, when all the able-bodied men were needed to fill the ranks of the army and defend France. As

for the mountebanks who were wont to make gaiety at the fair, and to be talked of at Faye for the ensuing year, never since the old jongleurs were granted safe-conduct by the Truce of God, and the privilege of passing all gates without paying toll, provided they caused their apes to perform free for the delectation of the gatekeepers, had fewer wild beasts, tumblers, and tight-rope girls gathered from all quarters to celebrate the feast of St. John. And, it need hardly be said, nobody troubled themselves to invent recherché holiday attire or bespeak partners for the *bourrée*, in which boys and girls were to be the only dancers.

The nightingale still sung in the bocage every night; but no little girl, aristocrat by birth and breeding, republican by rainbow-hued visions, ran out on the terrace of the Tour to ask what that wonderful plaint meant. The veil of the world's love and anguish had been lifted, and now she understood it only too well.

The summer, with its vegetables and fruits, had lightened the pinchings of poverty; but maladies born of famine, and nursed and brought to maturity by the green and luscious diet, were springing up everywhere. This one, and that other, were taken with cramps, and wastes, and sinkings, ending in fearfully rapid results. And there was no longer abundance of doctors, flourishing Latin, ignorance, and presumption, and betraying their hardened roughness to the common people (as Molière and Madame de Sevigné had painted them), to counterbalance the want of everything else, and lend even a show of relief. No more philosophic

monseigneurs and grand dames came down from the châteaux to analyze morbidly and meddle rashly, bringing with them baskets of stores, and speaking volumes of affable, pitiful, kind words, and seeing that the priest with the viaticum was in attendance. Neither were there priests to receive confession, promise absolution, and administer the sacraments of the exploded Church to groaning sufferers, to whom Goddesses of Reason did not come, and whom indeed they would have affronted and outraged had they presented themselves. Nothing was left for the miserable but to bite the dust to which they were bidden return.

The Tour remained dismantled and uninhabited, mere scathed and smoked walls, as it had been left on the May night when it was visited by the sans-culottes of La Maille. Michel Sart, into whose hands it was understood the property had fallen by private purchase, had merely protected it from further devastation. The hard trampled walks and terrace were already growing green with moss and weeds, while an ox-eyed daisy, which had sprung from the shattered sundial, raised its low-born face to the sun like a new timepiece. The little church by the bridge was in a still worse condition. It stood there with its gaping windows and smashed woodwork, nettles and docks sprouting thickly through the broken stones on the threshold.

Only the old brown rambling auberge remained unchanged among the great land marks. And even it was not altogether unchanged, for there was a novelty to

be seen at it, which perhaps outdid all the others. By the stove in the great room, or on the stone seat at the entrance, sat one of the grandest, handsomest women in the world. With her face and hands of finest porcelain, and dressed in clothes like La Sarte's —dark stuff gown, neckerchief, and cap without borders,—she quietly, and with the most inimitable air, did such light work as shelling peas, washing spinach, topping and tailing gooseberries, pulling out wool and flax. She addressed La Sarte and Babette as "my friends, my sisters," and Maitre Michel as "my son." Nor was she ever pettish to them, except when they forgot themselves and styled her Madame. Then she would reproach them with momentary severity for referring to the unhappy grand dame who had suffered so dolorous a fate. Could they not let the poor noble soul rest in peace? Instead of being ashamed of her position, or afraid of notice from the natives, the strange woman would hail them as they went and came from the fountain, speak to them as equals, and even keep them standing fumbling with their hands and shuffling with their feet while she challenged their attention: "What dost thou think of my currants, my good woman? Growest thou as big fellows?" Or she would investigate their engagements with the liveliest interest: "When goest thou to sell the first goslings, Denis? What price wilt thou ask, my good man? It will be superb if thou gettest two crowns for the family. These sales are the crust of our loaf, of which the fine people know nothing. Bah! their bread of prodigality is with-

out taste to us rustics." Even Mother Jullien retreated from the encounter, and a saying went abroad that Marlbrook retired into his kennel with his tail between his legs when that figure aired her industry in the courtyard.

Madame was wicked. She enjoyed the people's discomfiture and her own unbroken sway; took her snuff by stealth, and spread her hand before her face for a fan. She held the whole hamlet in greater awe, thus sitting unaffected, unabashed, even crazy, as the spectators considered her, than when she received guests in her tourelle, and looked down from among her birds and orange trees on the chaussée. She did not pine or prove herself fickle in her resolutions; nor did she ever swerve from her polite fiction that the most noble the Dame de Faye was dead and gone, and that Diane Ligny was a poor woman sustaining herself, like other poor women, by her handicraft, and dwelling among the people as their fellow. She did not even change her mind when the spoliation of tours was all but universal, and when marquises and princesses, worse off than herself, inasmuch as they had no disinherited daughter's dwelling of humble safety and plenty to hide their heads in, were driven to their worst straits. She was a marvellous woman this grand dame, with an almost sublime power of accommodating herself to circumstances, and intrepidly extracting profit and pleasure from them.

Michel Sart went about his work, steadily raising money, and seeing that the country labours were

pointedly executed in their season. It was an instinct of the orderly soul of the man to hate waste, neglect, and all abuse of God's gifts, though he recoiled from beginning repairs and alterations at the Tour, as his neighbours thought he should have done.

But Maitre Michel was careworn and depressed under his unique composure. He nailed up the roses because he could not bear to see them trailing among his feet, soiled, shedding their leaves before their time, and eaten by beasts. But he did not pluck and smell one of them. He trained the vine on the trellis of the gallery, and then he asked himself, would Jacqueline ever sit in its shadow again ? There was no Jacqueline issuing now from the little cell to the gallery to listen to the nightingale and the night wind, and look at the Tour under the evening star and the moon. And just as mourners over the departed look back to the hours when they watched by the dying bed with failing hearts, and say that then they were blest, inasmuch as their hope was not extinct and they still had a hold of those whom their souls loved ; so Michel, remorseful and destitute, came to think of those evenings in the gallery with Jacqueline as the happiest of his life.

La Sarte was troubled ; Michel moped in his activity ; and Babette was pouting herself to a shadow.

It had once been the height of Babette's ambition to live at the auberge with La Sarte and Maitre Michel, and assist them and their servants in their wholesome, bountiful, cheerful duties. The intrusion into the circle of Diane Ligny, and also a quiet cousin of La Sarte's,

who arrived about this time, ostensibly to pay a visit, but really, being a single woman well up in years, and with money saved in trade, to claim the protection of the registrar of Faye, need not have spoiled the group. The more the merrier it should have been, since no pinching poverty had come to the auberge. But Babette had now her will, as most people have it—in a very different fashion from what she had intended, and with no creature could it have agreed worse.

Her strong, square figure was become like a good-sized whipping-post. Her ripe, rich colour had got darkened. There were black lines below her eyes. A purple strained colour came out in patches on her cheekbones, as it had done at the time of the Lussacs' visit last summer, when the persecution began which drove Jacqueline to flight. The sinews on her arms were knotted, she clenched her hands, and moaned in her sleep, and was as restless as a murderer.

One afternoon Michel stayed in the meadows where poor Dominique had slept his unlucky sleep, turning over a crop of hay after the labourers had gone. Babette's restlessness that day reached a climax, so that she had to be gently reproved by La Sarte : "No, my child, you must not feed the turkeys again, you have fed them twice already this afternoon. Why! they are not stuffed, these, till they are killed and ready for table." Diane Ligny had remarked to her too : "Go not into the dairy, my girl; your heat will sour the milk. My word! such heat bodes a thunderstorm, La

Sarte." Babette could not bear the torture any longer of trying to sit still and spin, so she walked out and took refuge in the meadows with Michel. She was all flushed and panting when she found him tossing about the last wisps of grass. He did not notice her much,—he never had noticed her, Babette said to herself, bitterly,—as he made some slight comment on the weather. Yet Babette was worthy of notice. She was a fine-looking woman of her class, with a face full of piquancy and vigour, and though she was looking ill at ease and excited, she had not neglected her dress. Her purple petticoat with black stripes, her cherry-coloured corset, and her snowy cap above the hair she had with justice called superb, were all becoming, and such as a painter would have regarded as in fine tone with the waves of swathed green grass around, the open blue sky above, and the broad-shouldered, Gothic, grey-eyed, and yellow-haired Michel Sart at her side.

Michel only glanced up for a moment, and then let his eyes fall again. Perhaps he thought of another scene, in which he had acted a part. He might think of that misty August morning in the deep recess of the bocage, when a white dove from the Tour alighted at his feet, fluttering desperately towards him for shelter from falcon and fowler, and how, when there was no other way, he brought it to his own homely cage, where, to be sure, it drooped.

Babette looked at Michel with her arms crossed, and her low brow drawn together. Then she asked mys-

teriously, and in a perturbed voice, "My son, can you bear a blow?"

He started upright, flung down his fork, and demanded, "What is it you would say, Babette? Has anything happened to Jacqueline—or to Jonquille? Speak out, my girl." He showed no other token of emotion than his eagerness and a momentary trembling of the muscles about the mouth.

"Nothing of that sort," responded Babette promptly, with a toss of her pillared throat; "it is a long story, and I may get no thanks for telling it, but it is right you should hear it."

"Tell it me," he invited her, speaking now with a cool deliberation which had weighed his own strength and trust, and had found them not wanting; "I shall at any rate have no slander from Babette."

Babette winced, but held up her head again the next moment. "No, Michel, the mouth that laughs shows all its teeth. No one can say that I have ever stabbed with my tongue behind one's back, or that I did not worship that—that Demoiselle de Faye. Do you remember Teste, the little Cripple of Faye, who was trained as a dressmaker by the nuns in the Abbaye aux Dames at La Maille, and who is at present chief dressmaker at La Maille?"

"Yes, Babette, I remember."

"She has a brother, Ambrose, who is gone up to Paris, as other people's brothers——"

"As mine, you mean."

"But Ambrose might as well have stayed at home so

far as an old neighbour being deputy and commissary has helped him ; he is a workman still,—a baker, where they are always crying for bread."

"The better for him, Babette ; there is small demand for commodities in France, as we all know to our loss."

"We don't all know it, for who wants bread must have corn," contradicted Babette flatly. She was provoked, in spite of her good heart and her regard for Michel, at making so little impression upon him,—chagrined at his coolness and (for him) jesting manner. Certainly, there would be impression enough made soon, if he had a man's heart within his breast, under his still surface.

"Yes, indeed, corn," allowed Michel, candidly ; "but what of the flax, the wool, the timber from the woods, the produce of the orchards and the poultry yards ? My old woman is not so short-sighted."

"The Cripple goes up to Paris to see her brother and get the fashions. Hey ! what does she want with the fashions, when nobody cares about dress, unless it be a petit-maitre like Citizen Pepin ?" reflected Babette, sullenly.

"Stuff, Babette !" remonstrated Michel. "Every one cares that a comely young woman should dress as becomes her, were it only on a fête-day. She is one of God's creatures ; why should she not look her best ? It is the proof of her gratitude and obedience, as I understand it." The words were kind, but the most thorough coquette could hardly have twisted them into sweet flattery, and Babette replied to them ironically :

"Is it the week of the three Thursdays that you pay compliments, Maître Michel? Do you prove your gratitude? is it that you want to look your best?"

"Ah! well, I try it, Babette, when I have the time, and when it is suitable," replied Michel. He spoke a little sheepishly, for he wore a canvas blouse such as Monsieur's registrar had not known before this summer; and his straw hat was battered and brown, notwithstanding there being a new one with a fresh riband sewed round it by Babette, lying ready for him these weeks and weeks.

"The Cripple went up to Paris in the diligence, and came back fifteen days ago."

"Indeed! Did she not expect to come back?"

"She saw the sights,—the mobs and pikes seem to be the sights now,—but she also saw some people from Faye."

"Ah! it is coming," ejaculated Michel, drawing a long breath.

"Ambrose discovered that one night all the world was to be in one of the large houses, and he said, 'Come with me to the entrance gateway; I can make interest with the porter, and we will get in as far as the door of the hall, and will see the fashions divinely, and some old acquaintances from Faye.' They say the people go everywhere now."

"It seems so."

"Well, the Cripple accompanies her brother, and the first she sees enter—be prepared, Maître Michel—is the Chevalier de Faye."

Michel started a little, and reddened, but the agitation was momentary.

"Impossible! The Chevalier is in England with his wife and her family. My faith! he is not such a fool as to return to Paris this summer. It was Monsieur, Monsieur that the Cripple wished to say, but she let her tongue wag. I am glad Monsieur has so much liberty."

"She did not mean Monsieur. She knew the Chevalier in a moment, though he was dressed in an old coat and a flax wig like a mummer at Christmas or in the Carnival. She was sure of him by his chin turned up in the air,—the Cripple has a pretty sister, and the Chevalier always pointed his turned-up chin at the pretty girls; and Ambrose knew the woman who was with him, an actress he had seen play in the Théâtre des Variétés."

"Is that all?"

"No, it is not all," cried Babette, with a stamp of her foot which crushed the clover heads in the hay.

"But you suspect me, Michel; you think I make mysteries and troubles for nothing, for my profit, to make the handle of the basket dance," she complained, bitterly.

"Fy, Babette! I never said so," answered Michel, gravely.

"If I wanted to put you on the wheel, I should make you guess,—I should give you a hundred guesses. But no. Then the Cripple sees your brother Jonquille, and other fine people she does not know, and the ci-

devant Demoiselle de Faye, looking very bright and magnificent, more like the Demoiselle de Faye than she had ever seen the wife of Michel Sart look. She was glancing all about her, as the Cripple had seen her do in the streets, so that it was a miracle her gaze did not alight on Ambrose; but his sister thought it was because she had some face in her mind for which she was looking, and that, not finding it, she saw no other."

"Perhaps," assented Michel, slowly and doggedly.

"The porter takes the Cripple and others to the door of an antechamber, and there—so close there was no room for mistake—on two chairs, without Jonquille and any of the rest,—will you believe it, Michel?"

"Go on, woman," he said, in smothered impatience.

"There were the Chevalier and my old mistress; and they sat there speaking tête-à-tête, and looking at each other, till Jonquille appeared and led her away—Jonquille, who spoke to Ambrose Teste."

"Jonquille led her away," repeated Michel. His head had been down on his breast; he raised it again. "The Chevalier is in Paris,—good! it is at the risk of his head, but his head is his own. My wife meets her cousin, after a year's separation, at an assembly, and talks with him for half an hour or so on the affair of Monsieur,—good again! What would you, Babette? As for me, I am good-natured, I am not of a jealous temperament," and he laughed a hasty laugh.

"But the Chevalier is there at the risk of his head," screamed Babette; "and she has reason to hate him with a woman's scorn—do you know what that is,

Michel Sart? Yet the two sit apart whispering together until they are divided. And Ambrose tells his sister next morning, that he has secret information that the Chevalier de Faye passed one of the barriers at midnight under a feigned passport, in a post-chaise, with a figure in a cloak and hood, who called herself the *sister* of the traveller. My man, the Chevalier has no sister!"

"Malediction!" swore Michel Sart, with sudden, terrible rage.

"She is not worth your rage, let her go, Michel," sobbed Babette, in violent emotion and fear; for there was one man in the world Babette feared, and that was Michel Sart. "Let her go," she implored, clasping his arm.

"I follow her," said Michel, grinding the words through his teeth.

"For what?"

"To kill him, and take her away. She was mine, and though lost to me she shall not belong to another."

"These aristocrats, man and woman, are heartless, treacherous," pleaded Babette. "They hold only by each other, they put no value on all the world besides. Go! the people are well off to have the honour of serving their masters. But there are others who feel differently, who would go down on their knees and crawl to Rome to make you happy. How fortunate you are, Michel Sart, if you would but see it. Young, rich, esteemed, loved even, for there are people who have loved you who are so noble and so good,

so long as they could do so as a friend, and who only ask to have care for you, like a mother. Bethink yourself, Michel. The contract can be broken—you are not bound to her, you who are the proprietor of the Tour."

"Be silent, you know nothing about it," and Michel shook her off angrily; then he checked himself, and wanted to atone for his roughness. "Pardon me, Babette; but why will you speak to a man in a rage?" He could bear it no longer; he walked away from her with long strides through the hayfield, and out of sight.

Babette sat down on the withering grass, covered her face, and rocked herself from side to side. "He will go after her, will fight with the Chevalier, and they will slay each other. We shall have murdered him, her and me between us."

Babette did not see Maître Michel again till supper. He had then recovered his ordinary bearing, was considerate to all, gentle even to the old woman who called herself Diane Ligny. Babette cast keen, covert looks at him. It struck her that the deep lines about his mouth would soon dispute his age with his stalwart figure, and record him an old man before he was thirty.

Next day Michel avoided Babette, who did not, however, desire to attract his notice. She had reasons for not wishing him to see how sedulously she watched his movements, expecting every moment that he would saddle a horse and secretly possess himself of his knap-

sack. But he was out in the fields as usual all the morning. In the evening he was smoking his pipe in the gallery, looking across at the Tour.

"Babette," called Michel, softly, as Babette passed below.

Trembling in every limb with expectation, she ran up one of the stairs.

The moon was round enough to lend an ivory light to the scene. Was it the ivory light which softened the growing furrows in Michel's face, and gave to it an air of strange youth that did not belong to it, instead of a look of premature age? "Do you remember her, Babette?" he said, tenderly, "how good she was, how she felt for all, how fond she was of you, how she adored her parents, how much kindness she had for the old woman, for me? Of a truth, she would not have said a word to hurt us for the world. Why did we not find some other way to deliver her? Why did this tumult of a Revolution, when all men will have their rights until they have no more mind for their duties, break forth and drive the gentle vessel into strange waters? Demoiselles like her only love their equals; it could not well be otherwise. If she had but kept in her own sphere, she would have been a noble, loving dame, and all men would have blessed her."

"You did not love your equal, Maître Michel," said Babette, brusquely.

"Me? I was born to be her servant, her watch-dog. I should have guarded her more jealously. I was

lured, infatuated, and, word of Michel Sart! I did not know better. Now, if she has fallen, I would it were me who had sinned, that I might bear the punishment and the stain for her. But, good Babette, we will always think of her as she was in the bright, innocent days when she was our darling, like a nymph of the woods, like a young saint, with whom angels came and talked. We will save her, though we should traverse the world in search of her. Let him go; the world has only one villain more. God will bring him to judgment for this sin as for others, or he will cause him to repent in dust and ashes. But what is his punishment or repentance compared with her salvation? I go to prepare for my journey, Babette. I will take the old woman with me to Paris; she may be useful, and she will delight to embrace her Jonquille. I foresee many difficulties and trials; but courage! faith in God and love to her will carry me to my journey's end."

Michel went into the house, and Babette lingered in the gallery alone. "He will never forget her," she said to herself; but her voice had grown calm, as if all her tears were shed. And her face had caught a faint reflection of the peace of his. "He will never love me. But would he be Michel if he forsook her, though she has forsaken him and turned to another? He says he would rather have been guilty himself and his mistress pure. And would I not have him, so strong, so patient, so devoted to the last,—he whom nobody, not even his mother there, values as he

merits, while the world crowns the puppy Jonquille with laurels,—rather than my shallow, selfish, sneaking lover? This was where my Mademoiselle used to sit beside him. Poor child, it was not a natural seat to her, and I grudged it as though it had been the skin of my bones. Oh! Babette, you have been a cockatrice's egg in these honest people's bosoms. Yes! she was honest, clear as the sun, so long as I knew her. I could wager the cap from my head that if she has gone with that unhanged dog of a Chevalier, she has been misled, abused, carried off by fraud or force. I will tell Michel that, I will, and lighten the load on my breast. It will be something to see his grey eyes light up and his grave mouth smile, and to hear his tongue falter, in its haste to agree with me. I will, I will. I have lost earth; but it may have gained me heaven. Babette, you may not be the great loser in the end. And when you are like the angels of God, my child," she apostrophised herself, leaning her head against one of the pillars of the gallery, and shaking it in a great gust of sobs and tears, "there will be no harm in telling him then how you used to worship him, how desolate you were, how proud you would have been to have been called his wife."

CHAPTER XIV.

JONQUILLE'S SUN SETS FIRST IN THE RUE ST. HONORÉ, THEN
IN THE HALL OF THE CONVENTION—THE FIRST DAYS OF
JUNE—MONSIEUR BROUGHT TO AN EXAMINATION AND COM-
MITTED TO THE LUXEMBOURG.

 AS there something wrong in the house in the Rue St. Honoré, or in the Convention which represented the one and indivisible republic, that Jonquille was so engrossed and harassed? It was true he had still sufficient elasticity of nature to throw off a portion of his heavy cares. But in the Durand family there was no longer uninterrupted sunshine, and caresses without alloy, for the deputy and commissary. The Citizen and Citoyenne received him still with honours, but their faces looked anxious, and Hercules' plump body was inflated near to bursting. They spoke no more of looking out for furnished apartments for the newly wedded, or of the celebration of the nuptials of Félicité. Madame might even have been secretly exploring in new directions, to settle the long vexed question which refused to be settled—the marrying of her beautiful eldest daughter. As for Félicité, she did not share the worldly knowledge or the trepidation of her father and mother.

But she was getting more and more into grief with the old love and the new,—with the hidden and proclaimed lovers. There was no use in Jacqueline's remonstrating with her ; she acquiesced in every word Jacqueline said, was very penitent for being a little imprudent, and was quite ready to promise to be good in future. But when Bertrand crossed her path again, and looked black and desperate, then she could not resist being guilty of little ruses to attract his attention, and show her sympathy. She listened to him, pitied him, and as the sin was done, the repentance had also to be done over again.

In reality, Félicité gave the preference to Jonquille, in that easy manner in which a perfectly docile French girl is taught to regard the husband who is chosen for her. But the French say "there is no love without sentiment." The key to the girl of sixteen and a half's amiable, aggravating, weathercock behaviour was in her interpreting sentiment as the nation interpreted it,—as a kind of hair-breadth, cup-and-lip element, in which there was a deal of intrigue and mystery. Her openly acknowledged love for Jonquille wholly wanted the excitements and adventures producing those beatings of the heart so necessary to the young girl, and which she relished so keenly. Bertrand, being an unfortunate, or, as he described himself, a Werter lover, offered ten times the opportunity for exciting intercourse.

When Jacqueline first joined the household, Madame Durand kept a lynx eye on Félicité, restrained her overflowing pitifulness,—took care, at all events, that it

should not be displayed in the presence of Jonquille, or interfere with his prior claims. But now Madame Durand was out of sorts, perplexed, and she either overlooked or treated with indifference a great deal of sentimental manœuvring and coquetting between Félicité and the Southern. She may have thought it was not worth while to interfere, trusting to be soon honourably rid of Bertrand, who had at last found a friend who was making interest to procure a commission for him in the army, where, as a sous-lieutenant, he could defy all scrutiny into his antecedents, and win laurels, or more substantial spoils. As for the Citizen Hercules, he never interfered in family affairs.

Jonquille had at different times come upon short billet-doux, small pledges of love between the couple; but they had been as often explained away. He had discovered, too, that Félicité had excused herself from walking with her mother and him in the Palais Royal, that she might sit with Bertrand and Jacqueline. Instead of doing so, however, she would propose a walk, when Jacqueline, ignorant of all design, and wishing to preserve the proprieties (the bourgeois having proprieties where the noblesse had etiquette), would go with them as far as the trees at Longchamps. Jonquille, indeed, had reason to suspect that Félicité spoke with Bertrand through keyholes, and over windows, and behind backs, in a thousand clandestine fashions. So, naturally, the air began to be surcharged with jealousy, as clouds with electricity, and to bode a storm between the commissary and his Félicité.

Jonquille came early one evening to the Rue St. Honoré, and was told that Félicité was in bed with a nervous attack. He was full of remorse, lest his late peremptoriness and ungraciousness had occasioned the illness.

To break the tedium of his stay, Madame Durand began to speak to him and Jacqueline of the unaccountable absence of the servant Nicole, and to rail at the culprit.

"Nicole told me she was going to have her fortune told one of these days, and by none of the old women at the Pont Neuf, but by the famous Citizen Martin, in the Rue D'Anjou, near the street formerly called Dauphiné," chattered Olympe, triumphant at holding the clue to the missing maid, and thinking no more of it.

Jonquille moved as quickly as if he had been stung, darted his eyes to the corner, now vacant, where Bertrand often sat copying music for Félicité, and leaped up with such eagerness that the walking sword he had in its sheath fell out with a clang on the parqueted floor.

The Citoyenne screamed.

"Don't be afraid, Madame," Jonquille assured her, with a peculiar smile, "I only go to have my fortune told also. Depend upon it there is a pretty little party in the Rue D'Anjou already, but we will go and make it still larger and livelier. Come, my sister. Come, Olympe."

"Thou shalt not stir, thou story-telling minx. I shall beat thee over the nose again," threatened Madame.

Olympe seeing an unusual revelation had been torn from her, and that a beating was now in store for her, had her triumph changed into humiliation, against which she protested shrilly, with more force than reverence. "What will you, maman? you wanted to know where Nicole was gone. I said nothing of Félicité; I know nothing of Félicité. Will you lock me up? will you not suffer me to have my fortune told because of that crocodile blonde Mademoiselle?" Yet Olympe was well aware that the louder she cried, and the more she called Félicité names, the more certainly would she be locked up the moment the others departed.

Madame Durand ended the scene with a majesty which belonged to the yellow robe, the coiffure à la Chinoise, the meagre sharp features. "Without doubt, Citoyenne Sarte may go, if it please her; but truly, I would prefer that she preserve her brother-in-law from a mêlée, or, if he should go, that she bring him back when he sees how ill-founded are his cruel suspicions;" and the keen eyes were raised to heaven.

"I beg your pardon. Who said I had suspicions?" demanded Jonquille; "but grant me the favour of your company, my friend, that we may join this fine game,—this wise and beautiful amusement."

Jacqueline set out with her brother on their fool's errand. She kept up with his long strides, and submitted to his sombre silence as they threaded the throng.

They penetrated to the end of a little pent-up, airless court, and at the top of a staircase were ushered into a levée of feathered ladies and well-dressed young men.

For Martin the Cripple was a fortune-teller of repute, who had replaced Cagliostro and Mesmer, though the splendid circles and spells, the ardent, expressive physiognomies and eloquent gestures, were wanting in the narrow, dirty apartment. Clerks were going in and out, introducing and dismissing flocks of agitated company. In the foreground sat a little man who dragged himself across the floor with crutches. He shuffled a pack of cards with a gay, assured air, studied steadfastly a geographical chart, and was constantly adding to a heap of francs, double francs, and even golden louis, beside him on the table. Before him, in an old leathern arm-chair, like a pale blush-rose, with her fair delicate complexion and zephyr muslin, sat Félicité Durand. She had recovered magically from her nervous attack, and was taking a bad way to escape from its return. She whispered answers to questions, and hung entranced on the conjuror's words, thus remaining ignorant of the entrance of fresh visitors. Nicole, bribed by the promise that she also should have her fortune told, cowered open-mouthed beside her mistress. Bertrand stood behind Félicité. His face wore a half-sneer of derision, a half-imperious expression, as if he sought to control the prophet, and compel the prophecy to be favourable to his designs. A shade of credulity and sensitiveness was also to be noticed on his perfect Greek face.

A slight noise roused Félicité. She uttered a shriek more piercing than Madame Durand's, and started from the chair.

"*Sanctissima Madonna!*"—Martin affected Italian.

"Monsieur Citoyen, you must pay for this interruption," the adroit, self-possessed little man, half charlatan, half fanatic, said menacingly.

"Willingly," responded Jonquille, with a defiant air, and wearing his cocked hat among the uncovered men around him. "I was merely afraid that not having the honour of your acquaintance, you might miss me out in your history," he went on; while Bertrand scowled and drew his delicate lips together till they were almost invisible.

It was not in the rôle of Martin's performance to show any feeling, unless when he refused with scorn what he thought too small a price for his secrets. He looked at Jonquille with malicious meaning, however, as the young man flung down money, and, rather addressing the scared audience than the aggressor, he said aloud, "The Citizen wears his hat here to-day; will he wear his head anywhere this day twelve months?"

"Probably not; but it is as God wills, not as a mountebank like you ordains." So Jonquille threw back the challenge, as he proceeded to lead out Félicité.

The girl was wringing her hands in right earnest. "Why did you provoke the man, my Jonquille? How could you force your way into his room, and then be rude to him?"

"'My Jonquille!' Mademoiselle, that is charming. What were you doing in the den? how far do you propose to go in this treachery? how many more of these horrible indignities do you intend me to bear?" Jacqueline could hear this, through the din of the streets

and the mutterings of Bertrand, as they walked home. She could hear too Félicité's confession of her foolish desire to hear her fortune. Monsieur Bertrand, Félicité said, was going at any rate, and as Nicole was with them she had depended on Jonquille's goodness. But she would never, never be naughty again. The rising, the raging, and the subsiding of the quarrel were audible and intelligible, in scraps, to the last stern warning, "I will try you once again, Félicité; and if you fail me, then, by all the saints, we separate forever."

Félicité only said, "Try me, try me, Jonquille."

But Jonquille Sart was only once more in the house in the Rue St. Honoré. He came one morning earlier than he was wont, on his way to the Convention. The Durands had breakfasted in bed or singly, but there was always an hour's interval during which the shop was left to a solitary attendant, either the Citoyenne Durand or the girl Olympe. Citizen Hercules was improving the hour at his club, thundering his devotion to the Convention; while the shopmen were improving it at their clubs, spouting their patriotism. The busy scene of bales and yard-measures was deserted, and Olympe left in sole charge.

Madame Durand was sitting, out of deference to her caller, doing penance in her jupe and faded green market calèche. She was very weary of his unseasonable visit. Félicité was supposed to be engaged in household work. Bertrand had not returned from his *morning* stroll to the Halles, the Marché-aux-Fleurs,

or the Quai D'Antin, a favourite resort of the disguised aristocrats.

Jonquille stood moodily at one of the small jalousied windows. Olympe, her hair standing up in a tuft on the crown of her head as usual, and her short child's sacque fluttering away from her brown, sprawling arms, ran in to disturb the repose of the family.

"There are rats in the shop," she announced. "Oh ! Jonquille, my dear son," pouncing upon him, and hugging him, "are you come on purpose to catch them ? that will be sublime !"

"Chut, Olympe ! there are no rats in the shop," said Madame Durand positively, and frowning at the girl.

"But yes, there are rats behind the great bales to the right ; I have heard them many mornings. Why am I not to speak of the rats before Jonquille ? Is it that he is afraid of rats, the brave Jonquille ?"

"Not at all," said Jonquille, clasping the girl's willing hand. "March on ! let us have a search for these rats, Olympe," he suggested, casting a haughty look at Madame Durand.

Jonquille and Olympe marched to the shop ; Madame Durand followed. Jonquille went straight to the bales, piled one above another, and threw several of them down by a single effort.

A gallery constructed of webs of cloth was thus disclosed, and in it, leaning against one side as against a tree or a hedgerow, her hand in his, were Bertrand and Félicité. The effect would have been an irre-

sistible comedy, had not the great bell of Notre Dame rung a tragedy. But it was no longer Bertrand, nor even Félicité, who was cowed and overwhelmed. Bertrand stood erect, his lips parted in a contemptuous smile, showing the white teeth, which shone like the cleft kernel of a luscious fruit, now that his olive face was brown rather than green in its tint. Félicité plucked at the corner of her white camisole, pouted a little, like a dove pouting, and whimpered complainingly, "Am I always to be blamed? Cannot Citizen Pommeran and I range the bales without harm?"

Was Félicité herself instructed this fine morning that Jonquille's hands were too full for the punishment of Bertrand, or that the power of punishment had passed from his hands? She was quiet when she saw how white and still her betrothed husband was,—so white and still, with such despair in his eyes, that Madame Durand and Olympe were silenced in their clamour. "Adieu, Félicité," he said, quite low. "Destiny wills it; but I would it had not been thus. I would it had not been on this day of the year that you had been false, cruel. You would not have found me a complacent husband, so that it may be for the saving of lives that we are divided. But if you had trusted me, if you had told me you preferred that man whom I could not chase away because he lived on my sufferance, we might have embraced each other for the last time as friends." He turned and walked out of the shop, Olympe, Madame Durand, and now Félicité, seeking to recall him in vain. The brave, gentle

Jonquille was lost to Félicité ; and Jacqueline, who had begun to value him, was as inconsolable as his false love, till new trials superseded the old.

Before night Félicité had greater cause for sorrow and self-accusation. The tocsin was ringing, the drums beating, the cannon booming on the Pont Neuf. Citizen Hercules, and such well-to-do citizens, who pretended to red-hot zeal and the valour of mighty men, were perspiring at every pore, eating their big words, lying forlorn behind their counters, or staying at home and sighing for their old protectors, Lafayette and the National Guard.

Frenzied men and women, wild as beasts of prey, roamed and swarmed abroad, proclaiming new plots of the aristocrats, and new treasons of the generals. The Girondist flag, after bending and rising again several times, like colours held by a living hand in the thick of fight, was torn down and trampled under foot. Not without a struggle did the old lawyer band, the classical scholars and enthusiasts of the early Revolution, the men whose hands were pure, submit to their downfall. A hundred thousand troops—horse, foot, and artillery—surrounded the Tuileries, and the hall of the Convention, before the Girondists were expelled. The leaders were put under arrest, and hurried to their own houses. Peace was restored for the moment to Paris, the vanquished party flying for the most part to the fruitful breezy town of Caen, from which was shortly to issue the strange deliverer.

In many a house the bells and the drums sent

women like Félicité to their forgotten prayers and forsaken oratoires, there to lie prostrate in terror and remorse, all the blood in them stirred !

On the Sunday evening, when all was over with the Girondists, Citizen Hercules came into the entresol to the family supper. He was more goggle-eyed than ever, and though his ruby colour was blanched, yet he swelled with more than the old mock courage. Having completed his meal, he tapped on the table with the haft of his knife, and rose as if about to propose a toast. "My wife, my children, and my friends," he began,—Jacqueline and Bertrand being included under the last term,—"the Convention has dismissed the Girondists. I say nothing of their virtues or their crimes; the Convention is always right" ("a toujours raison"), shouted the Citizen, glaring round him, as who should say he was not a good republican? "The Convention has not in this case proceeded to the extremities of cord and axe. Be it so; we rejoice in the humanity and mercy of our great, illustrious Convention, because of late intrigues and illusions. As a rule, we cry death, burning, and infamy to all enemies of the Convention." Durand paused for breath, and to enable him to change from the fire-eater to the amiable host. "But there are no enemies of the glorious Convention here, and there are none who are not welcome to remain, so long as it is not forbidden by the noble Convention. There may be changes again." The Citizen sank his voice and slurred over the last words, as if he were very

near to treason. He broke off with a sonorous ahem ! and concluded : " I drink to your good health, Citoyenne Jacqueline, Citizen Bertrand ; may your personal affairs be all happily settled. Let us clink glasses."

He was not a monster, Citizen Hercules : he was good-natured, like many of his countrymen, was an egregious boaster, like more of them, and between the two he was an arrant hypocrite.

There was no demonstration of rebellion among the agitated company seated at the Durands' supper-table. Little Olympe was mystified ; to the other women the news was calculated to allay consternation rather than anything else. There had been no executions, and what did the women know of proscriptions ? They had soon a demonstration of a totally different character. The Citizen, his mind relieved from public burdens, relaxed fully to the courtesies and gallantries of private life. He rose again nimbly, and instead of frowning, smiled like a sunbeam. He laid his hand on his heart, drew his two heels together, and bowed like a dancing-master to the Citoyenne,—so much shaken by the last few days' work as to be almost reduced to skin and bone. He addressed her with the greatest enthusiasm : " My cherished wife, I have had the felicity of remembering that this is the eve of your fête-day. Others, too, have had the felicity of remembering it. Concitoyens, enter !" and the Citizen threw open the door with effect. At the signal a deputation of shopmen ascended the stair, the chief bearing a salver heaped with large nosegays. The Citizen selected the finest

bouquet of myrtles and camellias, and presented it, saluting the Citoyenne ; Félicité presented the second, likewise saluting her, and in addition craving her blessing ; Olympe, Jacqueline, Monsieur Bertrand, Etienne, Pierre, Arnaud, all followed.

The Citoyenne Durand sat with a trophy of flowers before her, reaching to a level with her nose. She was moved to tears, and cast up her eyes in an ecstasy to thank Heaven for giving her friends, children, guests, shopmen. It might have been a scene in Arcadia.

Before the first banished Girondist had stolen in disguise out of the gates of the city, to wander, ever more and more spurred on to a dismal end, young Félicité Durand was smiling, with a shade of pensiveness which rendered her sweet girlish smile more enchanting, in the dark glowing face of Bertrand Pommoran, putting her hand in his, and prepared, if he got that commission in the army, to re-elect him in Jonquille Sart's place, her future hope, her bridegroom.

But Jacqueline was sick at heart. Her chance of delivering Monsieur through the influence of her brother-in-law, the deputy and commissary, was at an end.

New cares had come upon the wedded girl, who had no other support now than the ancient creed of a God in the sky, and the motto of her class, " Noblesse oblige." She knew she was ere long to bring a new life into the world,—a life for which she was answerable ; but the thought of this precious life as yet only concentrated and intensified the strong cry in her heart, *that she herself was a child, and that her offended father*

was exposed to a thousand violent deaths in this Paris, slumbering the one day, raging the next.

Occurrences are often struck off by time in sharp repetition, like sparks from the anvil. An event vitally affecting Jacqueline, and rendering her callous to all the smaller events of life, happened immediately after the famous Girondist Sunday. Monsieur was removed from where he had quietly resided in the Rue Montmartre with his two gaolers during the months of May and June, and was taken before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

Monsieur found it a very short and simple business. He was greatly struck by the absence of familiar faces among the Representatives of the Nation, and the entirely altered mode of conducting the process. Monsieur had sat in the States-General of his own province, had been called to the Parliament of Paris, and had doubtless seen causes disposed of not quite in accordance with the principles of sacred or poetic justice. But here everything was summary and rash, and without conceivable motive.

Monsieur appeared before the tribunal in the old-fashioned velvet coat and older fashioned cordon bleu he had brought up for the purpose. That was bad enough, but still more out of keeping was his grand air, of which he could no more divest himself than he could strip the skin from his bones. The judges in feathered hats, and the jury and audience in red caps, were regarded by him with eyes so long accustomed to analyze that they had grown abstracted in their search for objects of speculation.

There was only one face Monsieur recognised among the horrible group in the saturnalia,—a face which caused his dreamy, supercilious indifference to fire up into something like wrath and disgust. It was the face of faithless, heartless *Egalité* Orleans. This son of princes formed one extreme of that company of big-cravated, booted, bullying men. The son of the cellars, Marat, formed the other,—the vagabond “friend of the people,” who, a true Ishmaelite, waged war with all order, property, dignity, beauty, purity, and worth. The oak crown of his acquittal was cast aside. Round his low, debased head, the ordinary filthy cloth was wrapt. He was great only like the tiger; he committed slaughter wholesale by way of benefiting his species.

Monsieur was asked—“What name?”

“Gabriel de Faye.”

“What age?”

“Fifty.”

“Residence?”

“The Tour de Faye.”

“Did you know Louis Chaterroux, ci-devant Sieur de Chaterroux?”

“Yes; years ago.”

“Have you corresponded with him?”

“Yes, but not recently.”

All questions very easily replied to.

“Enough! Commit the Citizen Gabriel Faye as ‘suspect;’ he has admitted that he has had treasonable acquaintances and communications. Remove him to the prison of the Luxembourg.”

There was no tiresome discussion as to the nature of the acquaintance or the purport of the communication ; no consideration of the remoteness of its date. No defence was listened to on any grounds. The Committee of the Tribunal, no longer hampered by the Girondists, could do nothing else but commit a "suspect" of the title and bearing of Monsieur, brought before them for having once nodded and written a note to a fellow-aristocrat who was gone to La Vendée !

"Good-bye, old Paul," said Monsieur, as he quitted the court ; "come no farther, my faithful domestic. I do not need to be waited on in prison, and prisons are bad places for the rheumatism. Take what louis-d'or I have to spare to carry you home."

Paul dared not refuse to accept his discharge, but the fine words and the scant gold did not console him as he hobbled homeward. Monsieur had lost freedom, possibly something more, that Paul could not face even in imagination ; and Paul himself had lost all social rank and importance, let them call France a Republic ten times over. Jacqueline received information of Monsieur's committal from Jonquille Sart. He wrote to her, counselling her to await the coming of Michel, to whom he had despatched a messenger, and reminding her that an unauthorized interference on the part of one who was now virtually a "suspect" himself, would fatally damage Monsieur's position.

He sought to soothe her, just as a generous man in his tribulation will seek to soothe a creature still

more stricken and helpless than himself. He assured her that the prisons had been inviolate since September ; that Monsieur's sentence might be still longer delayed ; that he might yet be saved from condemnation ; that while there was life there was hope.

CHAPTER XV.

THE TWO WOMEN OF JULY—THE DAUGHTER OF MONSIEUR WHO
HAD ERRED; THE DISCIPLE OF SOCRATES WHO COULD
NOT ERR.

ACQUELINE could not avail herself of Jonquille Sart's considerate caution. She was a warm-hearted, high-spirited, impulsive girl, who had been dangerously educated for the position she was in; and she was now goaded by a sense of guilt and the stings of a tender conscience.

It is hard to say what Jacqueline might have done had she always been a dutiful daughter. But she had lost time,—her father was in prison beyond her reach, and in imminent peril,—they remained unreconciled,—he was even ignorant that she had repented, that she lamented his wrath, loved him, and was hovering near him. These thoughts drove her wild. She had been stupid and frivolous, and had allowed herself to be diverted from her great duty of atonement; she must do something, however daring and despairing, or it would be too late to die with him even. She could not consult Jonquille. She would compromise the Durands by even confiding her secrets to them. They were

benevolent and disinterested in affording her a shelter. Indeed, if thousands had not been equally benevolent and disinterested, not one aristocrat who was not an émigré would have seen the return of peace.

The tie which had bound the two families in a close union of interests was unhappily broken. Jacqueline grew uncontrollably restless, and wandered about everywhere by herself, wholly rejecting Félicité's companionship. It would be a week or ten days till Michel received his summons, a week or ten days more till he arrived in Paris. Jacqueline could not sit still all that time. So she began her essays at independent action by going abroad alone all day, in the hot summer weather. She traversed the excited streets, watching with eager and unblenching eyes every sign of commotion. The girl who, before her marriage, had not ventured except once into the bocage at Faye, without the tendance of Babette, got hardened to the street encounters. She was not singular in these new expeditions, and that indeed was her safeguard.

The rage for liberty extended even to the women ; and at no time had they more of it. Respectable young girls adopted proud, self-helpful habits, which they practised with honourable impunity, unless in instances of discovered aristocracy. If they behaved with tolerable circumspection, the evil world was too busy to heed or molest them.

Another young woman repeatedly crossed Jacqueline in her walks on these eventful days. She was a striking figure. Her dress was simple and sombre ;

her long, flowing, dark curls were tied together loosely with a green riband, and were covered modestly by a low lace cap, which shaded a face of singular purity, frankness, and loftiness of purpose. She was a young woman, but evidently five or six years older than Jacqueline. She was the daughter of the Sieur d'Armanis, now reduced to cultivate his small inheritance with his own hands, like a peasant proprietor. She had come up in a western diligence from the house of her aunt, a woman of repute in a provincial town. Her alleged business was to get some family papers from the Minister of the Interior,—and a reliable, intelligent agent she was, judging from her courageous, calm, clear face. She had travelled quietly, reading or conversing thoughtfully and pleasantly with her fellow-travellers, and holding in her hand a wonderfully living, virtuous book of antiquity,—a great authority when all France was classic-bitten,—Plutarch's *Lives*.

She alighted at the Hôtel de la Providence, in the Rue des Vieux Augustins, where Jonquille Sart had his lodgings. She spoke to the people of the hotel about seeing the great fête on the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and asked if all the notabilities of Paris would be present and be easily distinguished. She also made some reference to the Pantheon, or temple of great men, playfully remarking that it would not be fair if no women were in it. Then she walked out and saw the sights, and crossed the path of Jacqueline Sarte. The last time Jacqueline met this woman, with the tenfold strength and the steady light of one dedi-

cated to a great object, and resolved on a course from which there was no turning aside, was in a place much frequented by women, and which Jacqueline too had visited of late. A strange place for any woman,—a solemn place for Jacqueline de Faye, an awful place for the daughter of the Sieur d'Armans,—the galleries of the new Hall of the Convention, in the old palace of the Tuilleries. The Tricoteuses, who now carried knives and pistols as well as knitting-needles, and who eat and drank as they knitted or shouted “To the fact, to the fact,” occupied the upper galleries when it was not their pleasure to tramp down-stairs and push themselves in among the deputies’ wives and daughters.

Jacqueline went into such company unprotected, save by the innocent, desolate look of her pale young face. She strained her eyes and ears to see and hear the members below, and exerted her mind to understand their decrees, and to ascertain how they might bear on the cases of the multitudes in prison, and especially on the single case of poor Monsieur. Here the beautiful strange young woman, alone like herself, drew near her, and entered into conversation with her, asking why certain great men were absent, and when they might be expected to reappear on the tribune of the Convention. Jacqueline made answer that she was a stranger in Paris, come up on her own proper business, and could afford no information.

A stranger in Paris, who had travelled there for her own ends! The Sieur d'Armans’ daughter looked earnestly at Jacqueline, with great, lustrous eyes, and

asked her with strange suddenness, "Will you confide to me your business? perhaps I can assist you. Who knows? it may be the same as mine. There need not be two of us; you are young and tender, like a little sister of mine; besides, you would throw away two lives. Leave it to me. Do not contest with me the duty, do not rob me of the renown." The silvery voice spoke with a kind of divine compassion and a great pride.

Jacqueline awoke from her lethargy and gazed on the face before her. If ever there was in mortal flesh the fearless radiant face of a heathen sibyl it was here.

She drew back with a little shiver from the almost supernatural aspect of the stranger, but she had no hesitation in trusting this stately condescending creature. "I came to save my father; he is in the Luxembourg," whispered Jacqueline, with trembling lips.

"Your father!" said Charlotte Corday, her silvery accents flowing unbroken over the words, as if they could not even momentarily arrest her; "I, too, have a father, but I have bidden him farewell. Behold! I am the child of all Frenchmen, of the human race."

"I do not understand you," pleaded Jacqueline, retreating farther and farther. "I have a noble, dear father—ah! he provoked me to anger, it is true, but I disobeyed and outraged him, and I shall be punished, if he is taken from me for ever."

"Can you not forget him, my child?" argued Charlotte. "Can you not lose sight of him in the great

family of mankind, of which he was but a fraction, and serve him in them?"

"No, no," cried Jacqueline, wringing her hands. "What can I do? My only wish is to go to my father, my own dear father, whom God gave me to obey and cherish."

"Poor child! I see you are very young and simple," exclaimed the silvery voice, in a blending of pity, disdain, and yearning. It was as though the speaker recalled for an instant the blossoming orchards of Normandy and the girlish, tender, lowly, reverent days, before the Book of Prayers and the New Testament were relinquished for Plutarch's Lives. But a great pride still seemed to prevail over all. "Go! I will do my work, and your father shall be free." She spoke like a queen, like an ancient goddess. She might have been a Pallas Athéné treading the earth again. But this was not in heathen Greece; it was in France in the eighteenth century of Christendom, after men and women had been taught all these years to be humble, long-suffering, merciful, and forgiving. Of what spirit could this beautiful figure be?

Jacqueline listened, transfixed, not knowing whether to call the words madness, or blasphemy. She saw her companion rise and go out tranquilly, like one raised above all tremour.

At the door of the Hall of the Convention, Charlotte Corday was detained by a shower. It was then that a foreigner got a fiacre for her, and seeking to know her name, was moved by the little ghastly,

theatrical intimation, "You will know it before long." Next day she bought a knife in the Palais Royal, and, engaging a fiacre a second time, requested to be driven to Marat's house in the Rue des Cordeliers. She asked to be admitted to the deputy with news of importance from Caen. She was shown by his own order to the room where he sat ill in a bath, and while he wrote down on his tablets the names of Girondist deputies which she gave him, she drew the knife from her girdle, and stabbed him to the heart.

Thus terribly did the daughter of the heathen philosophers illustrate the height of heathen virtue. No beautiful Judith or Jael was she. She believed in no God of the Hebrews nerving her feeble arm, sentencing His enemies to die by a weak woman's hand, and shielding and vindicating His inspired servant. Still she was beautiful with an awful beauty, as she stood relentless over her victim, and as she remained undaunted in the Palace of Justice. "Details are needless ; I killed Marat," she proclaimed, her silvery voice raised to a trumpet pitch ; "I killed one man, to save a hundred thousand ; a villain, to save innocents ; a savage wild beast, to give repose to my country." Then, turning with undefinable scorn on Fouquier Tinville, who observed she must be practised in crime, she said calmly, "The monster takes me for an assassin." A heroine of old heathenesses, she played her part marvellously, she identified herself with her character inimitably. Only twice did she falter in the drama. It was not when she wrote the witty letter to

Barbaroux, nor when she consoled her father with a quotation from their ancestor Corneille, nor when she welcomed the artists to take her portrait, bequeathing to one a lock of her hair. No, it was when she made a gentle reference to her young sister, and when her modesty shrank abashed as her neck was bared for the stroke of the guillotine.

It was on a July evening, about the hour when lovers walk and whisper in the twilight, while kind husbands and fathers return to peaceful, happy homes, that all Paris gathered to witness a great spectacle.

Jacqueline, with the other inhabitants of the Rue St. Honoré, witnessed the passing of a solitary cart from the Conciergerie to the place of execution, and were appalled. In it sat Jacqueline's friend of the Convention, the red chemise of a murdereress rendering her fair unclouded face yet more dazzlingly beautiful. Impassioned men bared their heads before her as she passed, and the very mob who had come to revile and execrate her for the sake of their cruel, dirty Marat, uttered low growls expressive of doubt and wonder. Adam Lux, a young German, fell madly in love with the sublime stage queen who died so grandly in her part in the play. He determined to publish her defence, and to demand for her a statue with the inscription, "Greater than Brutus." So he got thrown into the Abbaye Prison, and had his wish "to die with her" realized in the end.

Jacqueline fled from the sight to pray the Lord of suffering humanity for the cruel benefactress, who said

for herself that she needed not any shriving or ghostly aid.

Charlotte Corday beneath the guillotine was a woman for a moment. She blushed with swift bashful shame, as the executioner uncovered her neck. But she was a heroine of antiquity again when she recovered herself, and declared in her swelling heroic phrase, "This toilette of death, though performed by rude hands, leads to immortality." So bewildered were the multitude when Samson held up the peerless head, and struck it rudely on each cheek, that they were divided as to whether it was the last flush of maidenly modesty which still coloured the face, or whether it was an angry protest at the brutal indignity which for a second suffused the lifeless clay. Charlotte Corday, after a fashion set by the haughty philosophers of the Revolution, had in her presumption named the day of her crime "The day of the Preparation of Peace." Alas for the bitter fruit of the unnatural transgression ! Gross blasphemy and adoration of the remains of Marat ; his heart placed in an urn, and a chapel raised to him by his votaries ! This was the first pulsation of an electric thrill which, carried over France, stiffened and set men to new deeds of violence. Troubles threatened the country at Lyons, Marseilles, Bordeaux, in addition to the flame smouldering in La Vendée. The relics of the Girondists evacuated Caen, and, dispersing over the length and breadth of the country, were hunted down one by one, poor champions of a vanquished, vanished creed. Their doom was to die the death of dogs. Such were the

results for which the beautiful, gifted Charlotte Corday stained her hands with blood, and laid down her life in its prime.

It would be hard to describe the effect the tragedy had on Jacqueline Sarte, and other sensitive, desperate French girls. With their dramatic vein they half adored, half loathed the part which the Pucelle of their days had played so perfectly. But this is certain, that there was an impulse to improve on the act, and rob it of its unholy cruelty.

Jacqueline by nature clung to the pious, fond charities of her first relations, and her early home, and cared little for a wide circle, a broad theatre. But fatally left to herself in Paris,—having lost sight of Jonquille, and Michel not having come up from the provinces,—she executed a version of the tragedy of Charlotte Corday.

Into the Hall of the Convention, where the affairs of nations and whole continents were settled, this weak, foolish girl intruded her grain of private care; and appeared once more, not as a spectator, but as an actor. It is difficult to comprehend the position, in all its bearings, at this distance of time. Gleaming grotesquely in its insignificance, yet relieved by the childish greatness of its single-heartedness, a vision appeared before the eyes of those furiously eager, weightily engaged, and eminently practical men of the Mountain. A young woman rose up in the second gallery, clad in white, and letting her hood fall to show the white cockade in her hair, she called out

frantically, though piping in a sweet forced voice, "Live the King! Down with the Convention!"

It was like a sparrow perching on a telegraph wire and trilling a pert challenge while it awaited a current of electricity, or a partridge running in the face of a steam-engine. The treason was barefaced, its promulgation shrill and small; but it was enough for the humble, selfish purpose of the tender perpetrator. The Frenchmen were brave, but the recent fate of Marat shone lurid and fiery in the fumes of their imaginations. A few months later the girl of the people, Cécile Rénaud, who sought to look on a tyrant with a knife in her basket, passed in a red shirt from the Conciergerie to the guillotine, with her whole kindred and supposed accomplices, to the number of eighty innocent persons.

There was a blank pause and a wild stare, and then a tumultuous cry, "Arrest the woman! commit her! carry her off to the Conciergerie!" The Tricoteuses yelled as if the order was supererogatory; and they were prepared to descend from the ceiling to tear the culprit piecemeal. But no force was needed; the girl Jacqueline submitted even more readily than the woman Charlotte Corday. She only uttered one heart-piercing cry: "Ah! my citizens, send me not to the Conciergerie; send me to the Luxembourg, for your daughters' sakes. I have a father in the Luxembourg!" and with the lingering reverence for filial ties, and the wonderful leniency crossing the more wonderful inhumanity of the men, the deputies granted her prayer.

The knowledge of what Jacqueline had done burst on the house in the Rue St. Honoré. Her name was forthwith banished from the family vocabulary ; Félicité, in a summer shower of tears, collecting and putting out of sight all traces of her aristocratic friend. The rumour travelled in a vague, roundabout way to Jonquille, who stamped and gnashed his teeth in his bare room as he realized its full significance. He made ready to hail Michel Sart whenever he set foot in Paris.

CHAPTER XVI.

SUMMER LIFE IN THE PRISONS—GHOSTS IN THE LUXEMBOURG.



THE Luxembourg, the Abbaye, La Force, the Châtelet, and six or eight other prisons in Paris, down to the Conciergerie, might now be said, in the light of the growing licence and disorder of the city, to be elegant retreats. People were, however, a little distrustful, and were anxious to get out of them, since the massacres of last September, now nearly a year ago. And besides, the tumbril was still in attendance, though it now rattled to the gate only once or twice a week, and carried away no more than two or three persons at a time. But the French, as a rule, are strong nerved and contented, so they made the best of these prisons, and introduced into them their state ceremonial and their amusements.

In the middle of the summer of 1793 there were not above two or three thousand prisoners, and while the number was limited the company was naturally select. It consisted largely of ex-royalists, both nobles and people; mechanics from Lyons and Bordeaux, peasants from La Vendée, and a sprinkling of Lafay-

ettists and Girondists. The etiquette between these widely-separated classes was easily settled and maintained. The quality, indeed, took pride in bestowing largesses on the people, and retaining them as their dependants.

The prisoners purchased their meals, which were wholesome if somewhat frugal. They were surrounded with a halo of romance, for they were eaten by these ductile men and women just as children eat a tartine out of tinfoil, making believe it is cake and pudding, served up on solid silver. The attendants, though they styled Marquises and Baronnes Citoyens and Citoyennes, were overcome and borne down by the old supremacy, very much as the natives of Faye were frightened by Diane Ligny. They were amused, too, by the novelty of their position, and entertained by the sights they saw; and before their work became too hard and horribly complicated by the presence of the moutons—the prison spies,—they were in general good-natured gaolers.

In the evenings, the old card-tables were ranged, and the old circles of magnificent women, with grand deferential men leaning over their chairs, were formed. The toilets were the more recherché from the additional time allowed for their study, and the necessity of greater invention to produce variety in scanty wardrobes. At fixed hours, delicate hands were busy in public with purfling, tatting, and other pretty manœuvres, which the men's eyes watched curiously and admiringly. They were busier still in private on taffetas and cash-

mere, crape and gauze. This frippery they could not send out, and there were not more than two or three dressmakers and milliners in durance to subject the materials to professional skill.

The cultivation of the mind was not neglected. The aristocratic prisoners had taken a disgust at the feasts of good morals and the sensibilities which had led to the degradation of their rank and the martyrdom of their king. There was a marked return among them to the caustic sarcasms and scientific mania of such bureaux as Madame Dudevant's. They ignored any expression of earnestness and emotion, and replaced it by well-bred scorn. Incarcerated savants offered lectures on chemistry and astronomy to improve the time in the evenings, and the séances were attended by large and applauding audiences, who declared themselves much edified by the severe acquirements thus obligingly and by short roads brought home to them. Persons of taste more purely literary were indulged with readings from Boileau's critiques and Voltaire's "Mérope;" and the light, frolicsome Célestines and Augustes revelled in charades and bouts-rimés.

The French have always had a talent for friendship, a turn for gallantry;—but the friendships and loves of the summer prisons were witty compacts or frivolous liaisons.

St. Lazar and the Luxembourg were reckoned the most aristocratic prisons. In the afternoons, when the inmates took their airings in the courtyards, neither Longchamps of old nor the Tuileries alleys showed

more camellia-like human blossoms. Not only did the friends of the prisoners haunt the yellowing foliage of the Luxembourg gardens, but flocks of bourgeois, workmen, vagrants, sans-culottes, even insolent amazons of tricoteuses, paraded the walks to catch a faint reflection of the old unrivalled dignity and grace of their masters.

When a new prisoner arrived, if he was of the privileged order, the circles received him with courteous ceremony, and, rising to greet him, admitted him formally into their society.

There was one perceptible difference between the life in these prison corridors and the life in the old châteaux. There was from the first a slight air of ghostliness about the circles, which all their pride and their compliments could not conceal; a cold, faded, haggard mockery hovered over their attempts at display and good fellowship.

Monsieur de Faye was in good company, but somehow he had got out of the way of relishing it. Not a man there had a grander air; but he could not fall again into the old round, as when he went every afternoon to kiss Madame's hand, and play cards with her and his daughter at the Tour de Faye. Those around him, however, were, for the most part, of a younger generation. He missed his sombre room, its trophies and its studies; the hamlet, its men, women, and children; the demesne, and the bocage, where he had followed the chase; the marsh, where he had shot *snipes* and wild ducks. He missed old, vinegar-faced,

devoted Paul. He missed Maître Michel and Madame ; and, above all, he missed Jacqueline. He missed her so terribly that he never asked himself what was the great dreary blank in his life. There was nothing in the old palace of the Luxembourg to make up for these wants.

Monsieur took snuff and was gallant and philosophic, languidly holding himself aloof from his fellows. Still he would chat and play tric-trac sometimes with an old acquaintance, once Commandant but now Citoyen Bethune, a wiry, untameable little man, who loved to make points—points in a game, points in a grievance, points in his own trade of fortification, which, like the other trade of kingcraft, was turned upside down. More frequently Monsieur pondered and gazed wistfully at the girls with long curls waving to the waist, trains, and *négligées*, whose Court was a prison, but whose chatter never ceased any more than girls' chatter ceased in the old days at Versailles or Marly. A more wearisome confinement this than when old acquaintances in the King's and the Emperor's armies were forced to give and take arrests in Alsace or Westphalia, and were accustomed to let each other home on parole for the vintage.

All at once Monsieur roused himself, and became interested, even vigilant. Had the suspicions of prison plots, which were afterwards so lively and powerful, existed then, Monsieur might have been watched, or accused without any preliminary of meditating the deepest, most diabolical treason against the Convention.

Yet he had received no token from the world without. He had found no note baked into his roll ; he had no confection-box or snuff-box presented to him, provided with a secret spring, and disclosing to the proper person the arms of the royal family and the credentials of a leader in the royal cause ; he had not so much as picked up a bouquet with the flowers arranged in an emblematic device. All Monsieur's animation arose from certain invitations to supper, which one corridor was in the habit of politely despatching to another, and in virtue of which Monsieur, with other gentlemen in attendance on the ladies of the corridor blanc, went to visit the occupants of the corridor bleu.

There was nothing in the corridor bleu or its inmates to make an impression on a stranger. The same table, tabourets, and dishes ; another president to be sure, but so like the other, that he might have been a twin brother. . The company might have been the same, but with different names. The echo of the light, guarded, genteel conversation was alike. Still Monsieur showed himself unaccountably attracted to the corridor bleu. His attention rested without fail on a dark corner to the right of the president, since the particular evening when the corridors were paying and receiving a visit, and a dame or demoiselle—a late arrival, and alone, they said—was overcome by the heat, and fainted on the spot.

Monsieur availed himself of every permission to repair to the corridor bleu, and even incited Citoyen Commandant Bethune to have his famous point at tric-trac

tried there, so as to afford him an excuse for being there at other seasons than meal-times.

The same group, however composed, was always in the dark corner, with a central figure bending over an embroidery frame. Monsieur did not penetrate the women's phalanx beyond advancing near enough to see the pose of the figure, and hear the occasional low, hurried tones of a voice striking his ear distinctly among all the low voices of the women there. He did not remonstrate with the embroideress, as he might have done, on her risking her health by not taking air in the court. Only once or twice, when he had stayed within doors, did he detect a solitary figure stealing along in the outskirts of the company, and peeping up at the windows of his range of the building.

At length, one day when Citoyen Bethune was playing tric-trac in great glee, with an ex-admiral, in the corridor bleu, Monsieur of the corridor blanc, instead of remaining a spectator of the bloodless fight between the old captains on sea and land, began pacing backwards and forwards through the length and breadth of the salle from anteroom to anteroom. Sometimes he would stop to exchange a word with one or other of the groups which dotted his way. And by-and-bye he extended his march, like a sentinel wearied of the proscribed bounds, till at last he came quite close to the working party in the corner.

"You are restless, Monsieur," observed a gay voice.

"Yes, Madame; like a gendarme who is running

down a suspect," Monsieur answered her, as pleasantly.
"Do I disturb you by my march?"

"Not at all; we, the poor quality, have had to do with so many of the real gendarmes, that it will perhaps do us good to mock them a little."

When Monsieur's next turn brought him to the back of the seat before the frame, it was empty. The embroideress had quitted it, and slipped to the other side of the screen.

Monsieur returned to the ci-devant commandant and ex-admiral, and stood awhile contemplating their moves. There was something emphatically Gallic in their engrossed faces and vivacious gesticulation. The clatter of the dice was intermingled with cries of "Voilà!" "Go, my friend; return from where thou hast set out;" while the players tapped their foreheads, clasped their hands, and clutched dangerously at perruques which were never yet deranged in a single hair.

A game was ended, and Monsieur interfered to prevent the beginning of another. "Pardon, my Commandant; but perhaps you will permit me a single word apart on an affair in which I wish to have your advice," solicited Monsieur, blandly.

"With all my heart, Monsieur le Baron," replied the Commandant, cordially. "I think I know what it is," he added, as he linked his arm through Monsieur's, and walked alongside of him. "It is the stale fish we got yesterday: assuredly we ought to complain. The Convention may shut us up and guillotine us, but the dastards have no right to poison us by degrees."

"No, my friend, that is not it," said Monsieur, correcting him. "Have you not remarked that there is strange company in the Luxembourg?"

"Tredame! I think we have kept ourselves tolerably free from the bureaucratie," exclaimed the confidant, evidently puzzled; "but accidents will happen. However, as being first here, Monsieur, it is my duty to warn you, that after all claims have been adjudged by the president, and even quarterings seen to, no objection from you can be introduced, without granting the privilege of a rencontre,—and I fear those villains of deputies would not allow it, not even with foils."

"But no rencontre is possible, my friend," explained the other, speaking as agreeably as ever, but with a little anxiety, as he tightened his hand on his companion's shoulder.

"What! so bad as that!" cried the Commandant, coming to a standstill and shrugging his shoulders; "the company must be low indeed."

"That depends on circumstances. I speak of ghosts."

"Of ghosts! my Baron," repeated the Commandant, betrayed into evincing his amazement, commiseration, and contempt. But recovering himself instantly, he backed out of the difficulty with his customary ease and politeness, "Excuse me, Monsieur, I am a sceptic."

"And I also," avowed Monsieur, coolly. "But suppose, for example, there were ghosts in the Luxembourg," he pursued, unshaken in his equanimity and determination.

"Suppose it if you will," the Commandant said, affably; "there would certainly be a great number and variety of these honest people, the ghosts, since the old foundation. The three queens, I doubt, would not be so pleasant as they were in life."

"But suppose, again, there was a ghost whom you had known?"

"That would be joyous among so many strangers," asserted the Commandant; "but, unfortunately, Messieurs the Ghosts are not given to be joyous. I should prefer, for my part, to have no further communication with that quality, except, perhaps, to give them the salute in defiling past them, they being our advance column."

"But let this ghost have been of your most cherished relations, of your own family?"

"Very good! That is why he is come, I suppose," interrupted the Commandant.

"Wait, wait, my friend," and Monsieur detained him gently; "this — this relation has also offended you, wounded you, outraged you?"

"Very possible," acknowledged the Commandant blowing his nose with a splendid flourish, by which he atoned somewhat for the raggedness of his handkerchief,—for the Commandant's funds were running low, and he was so happy as to have neither wife nor daughter in prison to mend his linen for him.

Monsieur now went to the root of the matter. "Would it make any difference in the conduct demanded of a gentleman," he said, "if the sinner

stood in the light of a ghost where the rules of society had no longer any force, and where there could be no further satisfaction required from the guilty?"

"Zounds!" replied the Commandant, "the distinction is fine. You see I cannot tell what the etiquette of ghosts may be,—always supposing there are ghosts, and that they have an etiquette."

"Would you say now, Monsieur le Commandant," so Monsieur put the problem, "that the injured man would be free from the laws of society, that he could relinquish hostilities, forgive his enemy, and restore his relation to the old position without loss of honour?"

"I should say," pronounced the Commandant, carefully, "that there were offences which ought to go down with the offender to the grave, which no gentleman could forget. But as to sins against precedence, or place, or the forms of the world,—when there may be no forms in the next,—I should not object to restore a ghost to his grade, as that goes."

"I thank you, my Commandant," said Monsieur, accepting the decision gravely and with satisfaction. "You have answered me well; I detain you no longer from your tric-trac."

"Oh, don't mention it." He waved his hand in deprecation of his friend's gratitude as he spoke, and hastened back to the game.

The conversation had terminated where the promenade of the friends was arrested by the screen, and where they had halted to sum up the discussion. Monsieur waited till his ally had gone to a few yards'

distance, and then passed without hesitation beyond the barrier. "My daughter, my poor little one, do you hear? you are mine again since we are here. These prisons are the true sanctuaries, where all degrees are in train to cease. But God help you, why are you here? why did the man suffer it? and when you are in the Luxembourg, why do you play at hide-and-seek?"

Jacqueline was in his arms, clinging round his neck. The bliss was all the more exquisite for the past pain. The bliss of being forgiven was sweet, though it was only because her father condemned himself as a dying man. If she lived now to have a child, she would dare to look in its unconscious face, and not shrink from it as an unworthy mother, bringing only misfortune and guilt on its hapless head; for the condemnation was withdrawn, the debt was cancelled.

Her reconciliation with her father was complete. Monsieur was wonderfully tender to her, and after he had heard the details of her position, he forbore the most distant allusion either to her rebellion, or to her new ties. But he did not introduce her to his society, he kept apart from it with her. Unless when the Commandant Bethune, or any other old acquaintance, voluntarily accosted him, he did not join his equals.

The story of Jacqueline's mésalliance had spread through the prison. There had even been altercations about it. Some independent spirits were disposed to relax the stringency of their discipline, adopting Citizen Bethune's sagacious criterion. They alleged, besides,

that it was not half so great a difficulty as if Mademoiselle de Faye had been born of the people ; and then the registrar had succeeded to the estate, like most registrars, and his brother had been a deputy to the Convention, which, it was true, was an abominable institution, yet nobody could deny its importance.

But there were stancher aristocrats, who regarded Jacqueline as a leveller of the worst description, and put her under the ban forthwith and for ever. "Had she been guilty of any liaison such as a demoiselle might indulge in ; had she even been a dame separated from her husband with éclat, we could have borne it ; but to descend from her rank, forfeit her privileges, fly like an abandoned creature with a registrar,—she must be utterly lost to modesty and decency. We would not ride in the tumbril with her if we could help it. Va ! her father's heart is broken, he is imbecile," screamed these aristocrats.

"We will not offend anybody's virtue, my Jacqueline," observed Monsieur, quietly ; "it is not reasonable that we should punish them for our sins. We will say 'Good day' to them peaceably, and live by ourselves, save when they choose to come to us."

Jacqueline had become lowly in her own eyes, but she set all the greater store on Monsieur's dignity and peace of mind. "Ah ! my noble father, I have sentenced you to this isolation," Jacqueline said, sorrowfully.

"My child, if that were all, it were easily borne," said Monsieur, comforting her.

Father and daughter were thus thrown together, and

in a great measure separated from the rest of the company. The particular gaoler had sufficient good nature to transfer Jacqueline to the corridor blanc. There she sat next her father at table, and was shielded by him from slight and censure, as Maître Michel had shielded her at Faye from the rude sauciness of the villagers. She deserted the embroidery frame to work by him, and was proud to mend the lace of his cravats and ruffles, taking immense pains and displaying all her skill in doing it. Sometimes she worked at other work, which caused Monsieur to turn aside and groan in spirit, and which impelled some of the proud dames to whisper to each other, "Poor creature! she is, of a truth, horribly punished." The rough gaolers, not yet wholly brutalized, were affected as they looked at her. They loaded her with indulgences, as if she had been the pet of the prison. One tie France could not renounce, even when marriage had ceased to be a sacrament, and was only a legalized system of concubinage. Families were rent asunder, and children enrolled under different banners; but still the filial tie remained sacred, and when it was appealed to, the vilest, most savage hearts answered with a throb, showing that they were still human. As poor Madame Elizabeth had dressed the hair of the late King Louis, Jacqueline now dressed the hair of Monsieur, and would even be childishly merry over the task. The truth was, Jacqueline snatched a desperate happiness in serving Monsieur, and in prattling to him of their unique Madame, the old woman Diane Ligny, and of a thousand other topics.

She had long ceased to regret her own banishment from the circles into which she had been born. Sitting by Monsieur, and looking on at the worldliness, the straitened artificiality, the hollowness, the presumption, and the insane conceit of many men and women before her, she could not but contrast it with her experience in the sphere into which she had fallen. The unworldliness, the disinterestedness, of La Sarte and Maitre Michel, in their rusticity and rigidity, showed bright and clear beside the daily example of her elegant neighbours. The warm generosity of Jonquille, with his fervid flashes of genius, were as jewels, uncut and unset, beside paste or glass polished and put into wrought gold to deceive the vulgar multitude.

The Durands even were more kindly in their bourgeois vulgarity than the high people in their refined artifice. The coquetry of Félicité, though a spurious, vain, and paltry thing, had at least a touch of sweet naturalness, as of a child's extravagance and affectation, when contrasted with the trained, subtle, selfish coquetry—the living to shine, and not to please—of these women of the world. Without doubt they presented to Jacqueline their most heartless side, and perhaps in their own rooms they too would lean against windows, weep bitterly, and speak gentle words to their intimates and the members of their families. Indeed when the summer of the prison was ended, and the winter come, many of them threw aside their follies, and showed that a great deal of what was noble and true had lingered beneath false sentiment

and scepticism. The old Duchess de Grammont, while railing at the tribunal which condemned her, pointed to Madame de Châtelet beside her, and said, with an inconceivable softening of her haughty Jezebel face, “Kill me, but let this angel go.” Madame de Bois Berenger congratulated her mother that all the family were under one condemnation, and cried, “Be of good cheer, my mother ; we all die together.”

CHAPTER XVII.

ROUGH ROADS—THE NEW STYLE AND ITS FEAST—THE LAST OF THE GIRONDISTS—THE HARVEST OF DEATH IN THE PROVINCES.

ONQUILLE had hidden himself in a garret in the Faubourg Saint Martin. He had contrived, by great ingenuity, and with a heavy risk, that Michel, arriving at his old address, should be conducted, by many doubles and windings, to his new lodging. But Jonquille had not expected to meet his mother. At sight of the fine, calm old face, the young man did what a Frenchman can do without any imputation on his manhood—he fell on his knees before her, “clasped her like a lover,” and wetted her face with his tears. “My dear old woman, why are you here? Why have you come so far to a place like this?”

“It was necessary, my boy,” declared La Sarte, not more overcome than her son was, and recovering herself sooner. “I came to counsel you, to warn you.”

“To counsel and warn, mother? Is it not too late?”

“I came to tell you that you must put an end to these horrors,” asserted La Sarte, authoritatively, and only half attending to Jonquille’s words. “They are

neither Christian nor human. ‘Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.’”

“It is quite true, mother,” answered Jonquille simply, just as he might have done when, as a little boy, he was examined on his catechism.

“Then why do you not go and tell them so?” demanded his mother, sharply. “You must go this moment, Jonquille, or you will be held consenting to the deed. You were always facile, Jonquille.”

“Was I facile, mother?” he asked with a smile, putting her off.

“You were: but what a question when you have a duty to do. Never waste time and strength searching into the entrails of your soul. I was glad when Michel offered to bring me to Paris. It has been on my mind to come up ever since you killed the poor King. Oh, fy, fy, what a shame! Why did you do that, Jonquille? Did not I, the curé, and the Holy Scriptures teach you to be just and merciful, though you were republican?”

“I voted for the King’s banishment and not for his death. Banishment would have been the best thing that could have happened to him. I wish my conscience had no darker stain than that, mother.”

“But why did you and your fellows not stand up and prevent the murder?”

“Well, would it not have been better for us if we had stood up then?” pondered Jonquille. “It could not have been worse for us; we would but have died a little sooner, and at least we would have died defending one wrongly done to death—the son of a race of kings,

evil enough, but he did his best, poor Capet ! He was the only one who wished peace, they said. But, my mother, I have no longer a part to play. I am out of the Convention ; am ' suspect ' myself ; in danger which you, mother, and old Michel have unhappily come up from safe Faye, to share."

La Sarte's velvet eyes at last took in her son's plight. He was a skulking refugee instead of the strong senator she had hoped to find. "But I am glad of it," said the upright old woman ; "better suffer with the righteous than triumph with the wicked ;" and yet when she looked round on the mean garret under the tiles, and on Jonquille's neglected dress, all the mother's pride, love, and anguish for her darling struggled in the sob with which she stooped forward, and, with trembling, old, work-worn hands, smoothed his curls. "I would it had been the will of the good God," she said, "that you could have travelled His way by a smoother, sunnier road ; but if there is no easier path than this for you to Heaven, Jonquille, your mother is content."

"I thank you, my best mother. I used to say the women were kind to me because you had dedicated me to the Holy Virgin. Ah ! some of their kindness has been cruel ; but I still have you, my dearest. I must speak to Michel now, I have a sad communication for him."

Michel had stood aside, as was his wont, although his face was grey with consuming care, and his eyes had a famished expression. Jonquille came close to him. "Michel, do not blame me. I meant to do what I

could for her, but I was so embroiled myself ; and I never conceived she would take so desperate a step."

"Chut ! I do not blame you," said Michel, with choked utterance ; "I do not blame any one. Only tell me where she is gone, that I may follow." "Nothing can be easier. But, for our mother's sake, do not copy her madness. They are in the Luxembourg."

"What ! they were arrested, then ? They did not escape ?"

"No escape was attempted, after Monsieur was brought up and kept under surveillance."

"It is the Chevalier I mean, not Monsieur."

"Oh ! to the deuce with the Chevalier," cried Jonquille, somewhat impatiently. "What signifies the Chevalier ? Certainly he escaped ; he is a vile ingrate, or he would not have forsaken them."

"Saints ! but how then is my wife in the Luxembourg ?"

"It was quite simple, Michel ; she went and declared herself a royalist before the Convention ; and the wretched remnant of what we set up took her at her foolish word, and accepted her as a fit prey. It is not so astounding ; for the Convention, like Saturn, devours its own children. But I thought Jacqueline would have taken care of herself, with her expectation."

"What expectation ?"

"That of your becoming a father, Michel ; did you not know it ?"

Michel was greatly touched, and hid his face with his hands. He did not breathe a word to his brother

of the false report which had been brought to him and led him astray. He had grievously injured Jacqueline in his thoughts ; it would be injuring her still more to let his lips repeat the base suspicion. Nor did he comment on the information that his wife, by little short of an act of suicide, had cut herself off from him without having either asked his consent, or sought his forgiveness. She had come up to Paris with the single purpose of standing by her father, as she was doing, on the brink of the grave from which Michel could hardly hope to save her. These were hard lines from the young girl he had worshipped, but who apparently loved her father's little finger better than her husband's body. He felt in himself that it was culpable in Jacqueline to have so dealt with him, to have been so dead to his rights and hopes. But when he walked out into the anarchy of those Paris streets, and looked up at that great frowning pile of the Luxembourg, he forgave her, pitied her, and loved her more tenderly than ever. Crushing his pang of personal mortification, and only acknowledging his fond regard, he said to himself: " My lady sits there ministering to her father as innocent as a child in its mother's bosom. God be praised, come weal, come woe, I rejoice, my little lady is as pure as when first I knew her."

While these poor people were thus sorrowing over their troubles, Paris was rejoicing over yet another constitution and a new calendar. The world had gone back to the year 2, and this was the year's first month.

Sundays were abolished. There was one day in ten, not for the Nation to pray, but to make sport. Frenchmen were inaugurating these fine changes with a new feast of Federation, from which King, Queen, priests and altar, Lafayette and the National Guard (gone to fight in Holland), had alike disappeared.

The ceremonies were placed under the direction of David the painter, and of the old player who played so vigorously on the stage of the city of St. Géneviève. Gigantic statues, not of Géneviève, but of Nature and Liberty, stood in the place of the Bastille, and of the statue of Louis Quinze. Hercules with uplifted club represented the people, and "three thousand birds" were set free, as the people were judged to have been. Processions of the authorities, the professions, the trades, and the crafts, paraded the city, paying special homage to the Insurrection women,—the "slay-
terers,"—who sat on cannon in the line of march, and held oak branches in their hands. Every housetop bore a tricoloured flag, a pike, and a red cap, and on every wall was the old inscription, "The Republic one and indivisible. Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," but with the ominously significant addition, "or Death." Paris was more theatrical than ever, as she was more bloodthirsty.

Citizen Hercules Durand and his family enjoyed the spectacle as the old Roman populace enjoyed its shows. Félicité hung on the arm of her husband Bertrand, to whom she had been wedded by civil contract the day before. She was to part from him on the morrow; for

Bertrand, having got his sous-lieutenancy, was now under orders to join his regiment, at the wars, without delay. Citoyenne Durand had married her eldest at last, and was free to breathe and take a little pleasure before she started on a fresh campaign with Olympe. Félicité was clinging to her handsome husband, proud of her tricolour bridal finery; but the soft, yielding heart was like baby bones, not likely to be broken by thoughts of separation.

The three or four thousand prisoners in the numerous Bastilles in Paris could not be expected to relish the din. But the Sarts, poor souls, had gone abroad, fain to accept the diversion of the national holiday, and to escape from their heavy cares and sorrows in the crowd of strange sights and strange faces. Jonquille strode along in a frieze jacket and a countryman's cap, adopted for safety. The idea of La Sarte, in her market cloak (in which poor Jacqueline rode away to be married), rebuking Maximilien Robespierre and his allies, and calling them to order for their profanity, was half ludicrous, half sublime.

It seemed as if the Sarts were to pass through those vast human masses without recognition. Jonquille's disguise appeared effectual, and Maître Michel and La Sarte were unknown. But in the Place Louis Quinze they came on a hulking familiar figure. His hands were in his pockets, and he shouted like a madman at the unveiling of the ugly giantess Liberty. It was Sylvain the butcher, in his ordinary working clothes, and with the insignia of his trade hanging over his

shoulder. His great gloating eyes fell full upon the Sarts, and in a moment he was at their side. "What a genteel gathering!" he exclaimed; "it only wants the little Citoyenne to make it perfect. I felicitate myself, my friends, on our all being here on such a fine day. Welcome to Paris, Maître Michel, and you, too, La Sarte! My word, the women are not behind in this generation. You don't quit the city, now that you are here, till we meet again: perhaps we may transact a little business for old acquaintance' sake. That would be glorious—a new sensation. We love sensations, we French, is it not so? Pardon me, Deputy Jonquille, you are in deshabille to-day. You have not got a cold, an inclination to sneeze into the sack, hey? You did not find work for me when I asked it; what do you say to it now? Shall we not be more fortunate in the future?—in this very place—who knows?—where that plaster jade stands, and cumbers' the ground for her betters? Me, I think little of her. There was a real flesh-and-blood woman, in a red chemise, who was worth the looking at, worth the doing for. Citizen Samson was selfish; he kept her as he keeps all the choice subjects." Sylvain moved off: but stood at a little distance, looking at something.

"Let us be gone, my mother!" said Jonquille, in La Sarte's ear, burning with rage the while, and shivering with disgust as if the tertian ague had laid hold of him. "The company of this butcher pollutes us. The wretch is a slaughterer; he has been acting as an assistant to the executioner Samson."

"Wait there till I speak to the lost man—a child of Faye like you, my son. The judges should be the executioners ; they would then condemn less readily, and would not tempt the poor depraved remnant of humanity."

"Yes, mother, but what if they themselves become the condemned, the executed ? That would be a magnificent lesson in the justice and the mercy you preach ; but unfortunately it would be too late to teach it to the offenders. And don't you meddle with that demon Sylvain ; he is beyond you, my good old woman,—he is beyond humanity."

But La Sarte still persisted in remonstrating with the terrible native of her hamlet. Why was she the most influential woman in it if she was not to try and reclaim the wicked ? Jonquille thought to himself, "My mother, wise woman as she is, is so simple and dauntless, and so full of a grand conceit, that she would undertake to improve Lucifer, and perish in the bootless endeavour, all the while believing herself a martyr to the truth." In the present instance, La Sarte, to Jonquille's immense relief, was foiled in her benevolent aspirations by Sylvain slouching and shambling out of their neighbourhood.

Thus the hearty, wholesome harvest and vintage time, the season of apple gathering and walnut gathering, passed away. The quiet life of the Sarts, in the stifling room in the black Faubourg St. Martin, was diversified only by alarms for Jonquille, or by vain efforts for the benefit of their friends in the Luxembourg.

A harvest of another kind was about to begin in the provinces. As usual, Paris gave the first signal, those of the Girondist chiefs who were not already lying stabbed by the roadsides or in village taverns, or found half eaten by dogs in cornfields, being formally tried and condemned to death in the capital. Their last night together was not spent in stammering prayer or in struggling thoughts of human repentance and Divine mercy. These eloquent men of genius were not so happy. They joined in delirious song and laughter ; they improvised satires and scenes of tragedy. Thus they kept their last vigil. In the morning they filled the death-carts. As they rumbled along, bareheaded and in their shirtsleeves, they shouted back to the mob, with jovial grimaces, the monomaniacal shout, "Live the Republic !" Under the guillotine, instead of holy hymns, they raised the war-song of the *Marseillaise*.

Philippe Egalité followed. How could he escape, notwithstanding his artifices, his desertion of his rank, his betrayal of his kindred and his king ? He passed his own Palais Royal pinioned, on his way to the guillotine. He was more like a reckless gentleman, in his elegant green coat and punctilious yellow buckskins, and his "Let us be quick" to Samson, than he had ever been before.

Then, from Arras in the north to Marseilles in the south,—Brest, Bordeaux, Lyons, Nantes,—the revolted cities were conquered. Terrible were the sieges, frightful the sacks of these towns in the white mists and

sharp hoar-frosts of winter. The guillotine was erected everywhere, and worked incessantly. Children and aged men were executed together. Mothers were forcibly compelled to stand by and see the heads of their sons shorn away, while martial bands struck up the *Ca ira*.

But the guillotine was too slow. Fusillades came in fashion, and men, and women with children at the breast, five hundred at a time, were shot down. Noyades were invented,—flat-bottomed boats, crowded with men and women, which were taken out on the Loire, and scuttled and sunk, with one dismal splash and ringing cry. At last boats were found too troublesome and too expensive. It was sheer waste to lose the boat along with the passengers. Men and women were stripped, tied hand and foot, and cast into the river; while infants, who had been torn from their mothers' arms, were thrown in after them. By a devilish jest, men and women were tied together, foot to foot, hand to hand, and flung in. This mode, with cynical fitness, was named "Mariage Républicain."

All nature was sick with horror; but the grandeur, the pathos, and the faith of some of the victims were like streaks of heavenly light relieving thick darkness. The Vendéans went to death singing, "Those who die for God go to Paradise." Thirty-two simple nuns of Vaucluse renewed their vows of consecration every morning and every evening. After they had recited the prayers for the dying of their company, they filled their prison with the sweet swell of their *Te Deum*

laudamus. A poor countrywoman, who was executed for the mere profession of Christianity, stood barefooted through the cold morning, that she might give her stockings and sabots to the poor. Four sisters were guillotined together at Dijon for sheltering priests. Two schoolmistresses of Orleans died for the same offence with the priest they had sheltered. They walked to death singing, with as firm voices as ever raised the *Marseillaise*,—

“O sing a new song to the Lord,
Sing all the earth to God.”

Among the women, coarse and brutal, vain and proud, there were still “ministering angels.” A Brabant peasant guided Chateaubriand, then covered with small-pox, and sinking into insensibility from his wounds, to the hospital at Namur. Denounced rebels were harboured by women who were ready to shed the last drop of their blood for their former foes.

Amidst the harvest of death appeared a new portent. Men and women, who lightly rejected the Lord of life, threw away life itself as being no longer worth retaining,—a mere burden, to the endurance of which their philosophy, classics, and Jean Jacques brotherhood could not reconcile them. The nobles, robbed of supremacy and privilege, did not die with a more cynical indifference or a more reckless defiance than did the philosophers and the women of sentiment. They thrust their walking-swords into their breasts like Roland, swallowed poison in prison like Condorcet, shot them-

selves like Barbaroux, or leaped madly into the Loire and the Rhone after their murdered relatives. In this cowardly fashion they cut the Gordian knot which perplexed them. Even the good men and women of France, who could not look upon life and death with sneering contempt, came to regard them with dull apathy. So girls like Jacqueline rushed into the jaws of the lion, cheating sometimes, in a noble sort, their fathers, brothers, mothers, husbands.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE QUEENS CROWNED AND UNCROWNED—THE WOMAN WHO WAS NOT A QUEEN, WHO WAS ONLY “LYD, THE SLUT”—A WRETCHED FATHER’S DARLING.



ENTRAL types and figures were presented to the world in Paris during this brown October. She whom men now called the Widow Capet—a woman of thirty-eight, haggard and grey-headed, with no support but indomitable pride and the manly spirit of her mother, Maria Theresa—was brought before the Tribunal. Who would have recognised the blonde-haired, blue-eyed Archduchess of sixteen? Where now were Court and courtiers, or her two hundred thousand lovers?

She had suffered trials and indignities beyond record. She had been parted from her good husband on that bleak January night, the eve of his execution. Her little son had been torn from her. She had been denied even comfort and decency, and put into a cell of the Conciergerie, with its truckle bed, deal table, and damp stone walls. There she had been guarded by gendarmes, their eyes on her night and day. This was the lot of her who in her heyday had been the good fairy of Trianon, and who in romantic generosity

endowed the virtuous, loyal poor with cottage bowers undreamt-of in their beauty. Some of her pensioners did remember her, for at last she fell into pitying hands, which bound her hair, mended her rags, and brought to her the delicacies that were sent her by the market-women of the Halles. They procured for her, too, in place of the muddy water she could not drink, pure water from Arcuenil, her old favourite well at Trianon. Poor royal eagle, prisoned in that wretched cage!

Before the Tribunal she sat absent, heedless, moving her fingers on the arm of her chair, as if playing on the harpsichord, until she was assailed with the falsest, most infamous accusations. Then she made one strong appeal to all the mothers in the hall—a cry responded to even amidst the lurid shadows of that place of woe --before her doom was sealed.

A close cap covered her grey hair, cut short for execution ; her hands were bound behind her, as she sat on the cart beside the priest, on this her last progress through Paris. Did she see pass before her mind's eye, like one drowning, the phantasmagoria of the pleasant past, now so far distant ? Did she see imperious, warm-hearted Maria Theresa ; debonnaire, kindly, good-for-nothing Francis of Lorraine ; unworldly, highminded, dreaming Joseph ; or the gross, humorous termagant, Caroline of Naples, whom Nelson sheltered ? Or did Schönbrunn shape itself to her imagination, and the winter fairs on the Danube, with the wild Hungarian faces, fur caps and pelisses, and the Gothic

castle which was the big toy of the great restless family of archdukes and archduchesses?

It was so different from this, that early life, with its natural gladness and its artificial splendour, its Courts and cabals, its bursts of girlish spleen at tiresome etiquette, its ruelles and tabourets.

“Faults, not crimes,” said the firmly drawn lips to the priest, as these giddy, remote, secure days were recalled. That famous drive through the streets, including the stoppage opposite the church of St. Roch, to let the crowd feast its revengeful eyes on the Austrian woman, occupied about an hour’s time. Marie Antoinette looked up absently at the republican flags and inscriptions in the Rue St. Honoré; but some said she watched for a signal of absolution from a nonjuring priest. As she approached the Place de la Revolution, and came in sight of her own home, erewhile the Tuileries, her stony endurance for a moment gave way. Twenty-three years ago, with the mild young Dauphin by her side, she made her triumphal entry there; two hundred thousand voices, by permission of the gallant Governor of Paris, huzzaing round her coach. “If the mob get me,” she said this morning, “they will tear me to pieces.” Samson was at his post at a quarter past twelve on this 16th October, 1793. The daughter of Austria mounted the scaffold with queenly courage, and her head fell amidst the cries of “Live the Republic!”

She was no soft-hearted, meek-spirited woman, dying with words of divine forgiveness on her lips, such as

Louis had spoken. It were false to speak of her as such. But she was honest and brave,— a woman who bore with the greatest dignity such tremendous reverses, such deadly injuries, such foul slanders, that all manhood, all womanhood rises up in her defence. Wherein she was wanting let us leave her to Him who judges right.

Within a little month another queen, who never wore a crown, except in men's imaginations, occupied Charlotte Corday's cell in the Pèlagie, and then the cell next to that which Marie Antoinette had filled in the Conciergerie. This woman held Charlotte Corday to be an enthusiastic visionary ; and in the nature of things she detested and despised Marie Antoinette as a tyrant and trifler. She addressed a haughty, harsh, even audacious remonstrance to Louis while he was still King in name ; and she pled for him gallantly, at the risk of her own life, when he was "Louis Capet" on the brink of the scaffold. She, too, had sat at the feet of Socrates, pure, fervent, devoted,— a heathen goddess, a Juno or a Minerva, hardly a woman. She fulfilled all heathen virtues, even to the humble duties of going to market with her mother, and mending her spendthrift father's linen, in the middle of reading her Tacitus. She wedded the elderly, stern Roland because he seemed to her a Spartan lawgiver ; and she *served* him loyally—a Spartan wife. She cherished great dreams as the wife of the Minister of the Interior, and the associate of Pétion and Robespierre,—proud, noble dreams, and she acted in con-

sistency with them. She was arrested and sent to the prison of the Pèlagie—the den of women of dissolute life,—but that could not degrade Manon Roland. Then she was removed to the Conciergerie, where she spoke to her fellow Girondists frank, courageous words. In white dress, “like the Julie of Rousseau,” she stood her trial. Her clear, chiselled features, her soft, dark eyes, her long black hair falling in waves to her waist, did not shield her from scowling hatred and words of dishonour. But she met those goads with silent scorn, though “wet eyed,”—the one trace of womanhood she betrayed amid the torture. Undaunted, she was driven through the streets to execution. Some say she sang the *Marseillaise* as she went, high and clear. She wished for pen and paper to write her thoughts,—the concluding chapter of the life she had written while in prison. She apostrophised the statue of Liberty at the foot of the guillotine ;—“O Liberty, what things are done in thy name !” She showed an ex-director how to die. When Samson objected to her going first for this object, she said, half jestingly, “Pshaw ! you cannot refuse the last request of a lady,” and passed away, as Charlotte Corday had done, without once faltering in her part. One of the most inimitable of classic actresses, one of the bravest and purest of heathen goddesses, yet there were some traits of womanhood in her.* Those unacknowledged hours

* In the last biography of Madame Roland, and in the criticism it has provoked, it is alleged that she was pre-eminently feminine in her incapacity to see more than one side of a political question,

when she leaned against her cell-window weeping bitterly ; that brief allusion to her daughter's birthday ; and the calm comment that her husband would not long survive her, showed she had something of a woman's heart. "A greater man than ever thou wert," was said truly of her in comparison with Roland. Severe, serene, perfect in heathen duty, she was a very queen of the histrionic art. She still walks a stately shade among the famous women of the world, though tender women and little children recoil from her to sit at His feet where sat the woman who was a sinner. If *she* had sat there too, the sad, lofty relic of ancient virtue might have blossomed into new beauty of worship and beneficence, through many centuries.

In the Luxembourg, along with Jacqueline, was a Madame Ropace, — a pretty, mouse-faced woman, though past her prime. She was frolicsome and piquant, and was consequently indulged by the grand dames, though not a grand dame herself. Unlike the others, she had a habit of saying fairly what she

and in that strange episode in her history when she not only confessed to the confounded, mortified Roland, but proclaimed to the world at large, her platonic passion for a man unknown, whether Barbaroux or another. Why, a one-sided view of political questions was the fatal flaw in nine-tenths of the *men* of the Revolution ; and the admirers or assailants of Madame Roland, who say that her unnatural revelation was in keeping with her sex, must have singular misconceptions of that sex's character, when they can mistake an outrage on womanliness for womanliness itself.

thought, while she was as cynical and epigrammatic as they were.

Monsieur, looking at Madame Ropace, and listening to her, said at once, in spite of her pure French accent, and her general French air, "My dear, she is foreign, that Madame Ropace."

She was certainly not particular about the company she kept. It was perhaps a weakness she had inherited. She accosted Jacqueline in her peculiarly vivacious way, and made a confidante of the younger woman on the spot. "Little thought my poor father, when he was so anxious that I should learn to chatter French and play the guitar, that this was to be the end of it all. Were he to take a new sentimental journey through France, he would find more to cry over than a dead ass. He often cried when he was not laughing, my father; only the laughter always ran away with the tears. But neither Mr. Shandy nor Smelfungus would find much to laugh at now; is it not so? Perhaps he would not have laughed so wildly if he had stayed more with us, for he was kind to me, my poor father, though he was considered quite a doubtful character in England; and he a priest too, you comprehend?" So explained Madame Ropace, with the freedom of a woman who came of a family given to speak their minds. "You are very fortunate to have Monsieur with you, even here," she would continue. "I saw very little of my father, though he loved me dearly. I had to acquire French like a native,—my faith! I have acquired it too much like a native; and then I

had to learn to sing romances too. My mother was obstinate and always sickly. My father was also ill,—the worse of the two, indeed; but when he was not travelling for his health and amusement, he had to live in his parish and preach sometimes. He was an orator, I can tell you, though he was a doubtful character. I heard him twice or thrice. Ah! it is so long since I was Lydia Sterne, Miss, speaking my French, and dancing minuets at the York balls, the admired of the room, the delight of my father," sighed the woman, with sharp regret.

Madame Ropace was the first to be called to leave her set in the Luxembourg for a place in the tumbril. To the last she was foreign in her behaviour. She did not take her leave with the haughty composure and the grace of the greater part of the French women; neither did she submit with the sentiment, the passionate ecstasy, and the childlike indifference of others. She cried, Was there no help? as there would have been, she averred, in her country. Her treatment she pronounced unjust as well as inhuman. The time some of the "départs" were allowed to spend in writing farewell letters to their friends, she employed over a book in which she had lately been reading every day. Once as she passed Jacqueline, gazing at her with trembling lips and awe-struck eyes, she looked at the girl and Monsieur, and showed them her book. "My father sent it to me, though he was a doubtful character. See on the title-page—'Lydia Sterne, from her loving father.' I remember it came to me along

with a packet of guitar strings, and a droll message. It was something like this: ‘Lyd, you little slut, I am always dying, as you know; yet, ‘gad, I cannot rest long enough to think much of dying on my own account. But when you want to learn to do anything as disagreeable as to die, my Lyd, read this old book. There is something in it.’ He said, too, I remember, that there were too many encyclopédistes in France for the priests to prevent me, even if the good fellows the priests had ever been so far in earnest these hundred years, as to think of persecution. It is long, long since I was ‘Lyd the slut,’ but I read the book, as you see, to learn how to die.”

Madame Ropace took her book with her when she went before her judges. She came out with it in one hand, while with the other she held up the finger signifying “Condemned: death within twenty-four hours.” A communicative gaoler saw her with the book still in her lap in the cart. She tried to read, though the print was dim and the language strange to her; and her hands being bound, she could not turn over a leaf. Poor, wrecked Laurence Sterne, apostate to his vows, and whose glory was his shame, yet loved his Lyd; and Lyd, daughter of a hard, eccentric mother and a Bohemian father, loved him.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE GUILLOTINE GOES ALWAYS—FRESH ARRIVALS AT THE LUXEMBOURG.

 RANCE was oppressed with its eleven thousand prisoners in Paris, and the inmates of its innumerable gaols all over the country. Men were growing haggard with the exertion of emptying the prisons of Paris alone. In spite of the continual rumble of the death tumbrils, conveying batches of fifty or seventy at a time, to the Place de la Révolution, none of whom returned to plague the authorities, the prison population increased, so that the eleven thousand became twenty-two thousand before another six months. The blood of the slain was the seed of fresh prisoners. The Revolutionary Tribunal, with its quick despatch, and Samson, with his numerous assistants, found the work too heavy. They could not drain off the continual flood which now poured in from all quarters—from the Faubourg St. Antoine, as well as the Faubourg St. Germain,—and from all shades of political opinions. The gorged receptacles forced old regulations to be done away with. The mania for “suspects” was now, in fact, the mania of France, and there was even a sort of wild panic,

which attributed to the infinite varieties of suspects in prison the most complicated, outrageous plots with the exiled princes, and with Pitt in England.

The heavy atmosphere inseparable from prisons was clogged by the fresh additions to the great company. Prisoners slept on benches, and lay even on the floors, adding greatly to the sickening fetid odours. The very lobbies and staircases were tenanted during the night by great dogs, which, let loose, went howling up and down the corridors. The meals degenerated into the one coarse diet, which merely sufficed to keep in life. The commonest attendance was impossible, or if procured, it was from wretches the lowest and vilest of their kind. The prisons, which had been comparatively elegant retreats in summer, were fast sinking into squalid, filthy, loathsome dens. The air of ghostliness, which had belonged to the magnificent earlier circles, was now unmistakeably apparent in the worn skeleton frames of their surviving members, and in the incessant changes, in the wandering to and fro of the new comers, and in their wailings, as of lost spirits.

Jacqueline and Monsieur were still spared to each other. The awful horror of the nightly removals had to some extent been deadened by sheer repetition. A weary submission to the inevitable took the place of hope or of more active feeling. The excitement was limited to the reading over of a list, which, by a wide-spread prison joke, had been termed "the Evening Journal." It contained the names of the men and

women summoned before the Tribunal, and who were passed on, with hardly an exception, to the square of the guillotine.

Few winter flowers were brought into the prison for Jacqueline to stick into Monsieur's coat; but she still dressed his hair for him, tying its riband with fond pride and care. She would prattle, though in fainter tones than before, about old stories of November cold, and wonder whether the wolves would come near Faye this year, and prevent the villagers getting to the bocage for their billets of wood.

When fresh arrivals entered from the world without, a little stir was created in the crammed, suffocating corridors. Men gazed curiously on the prisoners who had just breathed the open air, and were still dazed and desperate under their arrest. Startled, softened recognitions between friend and friend, relative and relative, would frequently occur; but the one pang, of being separated in death, was the experience of many a family of prisoners.

Jacqueline was pensively regarding a new entrance one raw November day. Those brown-grey moorland eyes became fixed, and dilated with mingled surprise and fear as she looked. Suddenly she sprang up with a low cry.

The group which had attracted her consisted of a handsome old peasant woman, a fine-looking young man in a countryman's dress, and a shot-out girl of thirteen in a fine gown, which she was pulling up and carefully arranging, even in the Luxembourg.

"Father, it is La Sarte and her son Jonquille, and Olympe Durand," she exclaimed.

"Hey!" said Monsieur, with a little start, for he had been looking in an opposite direction. "Poor people! My little one, go to them. They are your family. A woman must never be guilty of the baseness of denying her own, under any circumstances. Do not let me be in the way. For my part, I shall be glad to ask La Sarte the last news of Faye, and to inquire of Cadet Sart the fate of his broken party," subjoined Monsieur, with the delicate condescension of his breeding.

"I wish Michel had come too. I would like to see him once again. We are all here now but Michel and Madame," said Jacqueline. But she did not repeat the wish when La Sarte put her hands on her daughter-in-law's shoulders, and shed those rare tears which old eyes shed.

"And this is the end of your journey, Jacquette? No, no; I do not reproach you, my child. I do not cry for you, but for Michel, my brave Michel, who cannot get near his wife, and will never see his child," mourned La Sarte.

"Fy, mother, to agitate my sister," remonstrated Jonquille. "She will do well, and Michel will get her out of this lazarus; have no fear. Michel will yet be recompensed for all his trouble."

"Madame Michel, Madame Michel! how do you like my gown?" interposed a shrill, pert voice, which went on with the greatest volubility,—"Oh! I have been dressed like a Christian and the daughter of a

wealthy bourgeois, since Félicité married Bertrand. You wonder to see me here with the Sarts? Bah! that explains itself. I take a last run out all alone. I extend my run to have a look at Jonquille's old lodgings in the street of the Old Augustins, you remember? perhaps get a glimpse of my friend. A man in the street sees me reading the number, and asks me if I can deliver the least little billet-doux to Jonquille here. Without doubt. I question the porter, and prowl about in search of his new lodgings. I have a secret as well as Félicité now, though I am ugly; I know it, and nobody goes into raptures about my fine eyes. I lose my way; I find it again. Ouf! up comes a surly gendarme and settles the affair; informs me that Citizen Jonquille Sart is no longer deputy and commissary; that he is a 'suspect,' and was arrested this morning in company with an old woman who said she would go with her son. 'The Nation is liberal; it keeps her, provides for her too. Come along, my young miss; you are also a "suspecte." Eh, well, he pinched my arm like a hawk and dragged me along the streets, though I assure you I ran to keep up with him. I was so glad when I found Jonquille, and this good mother. I astonished them all; I cut a complete caper with joy.'

"Poor child!" murmured Jonquille; and he went on, "The strangest thing of all was that the note, a piece of balderdash, came in a roundabout way from that fellow Bertrand, on his way to the army. 'My old rival,' he wrote, 'I have really nothing more to do

with Messieurs the Rats than you have. Leave Paris instantly ; every Girondist is doomed.' Sacrifie ! where was the use of telling that to me, who knew it so much better than he did ? I tell you he was an idiot, that fine fellow, with his Greek face and his tempers. He will lead her a sorry life when he comes back ;— but why should I vex myself? She was a little coquette, Félicité, and I shall not live to see her sufferings."

Of all the shocks and surprises Jacqueline had met, one of the strangest, in which weeping and an inclination to hysterical laughter were strangely blended, was the sight of Olympe Durand mincing in her woman's finery, a prisoner in the Luxembourg under the shadow of the guillotine. Another image always rose in Jacqueline's memory — Olympe fluttering in her child's rags, with her queer, irregular features, her great round black eyes, her flat nose, smeared with ink, as she sat over one of Bertrand's copies, or flew with agile feet in the infernal galop with Jonquille.

Poor young Olympe ! there was many a victim whose loss was more felt, though the Citizen Hercules and the Citoyenne Durand, and young Madame Pommeran, were bereaved after their kind. Yet the Convention could do no wrong, and the poor Citizen Hercules less than ever dared to blame it.

But Olympe was to Jacqueline the most pathetic thing in the great prison that day.

"Come and greet Monsieur," Jacqueline, with a little confusion, solicited her husband's family ; "he has asked for you."

La Sarte at once went up to the old Sieur. "Monsieur le Baron, permit me to offer you my service," she said, with a respectful bend of her stiff old knees.

"What, La Sarte, do you style me Monsieur still? I thought you were the first of our Republicans."

"But you were Monsieur before I or my mother was born, Monsieur le Baron; and I always sought to give every one his due."

"Ah! I see. How goes it at Faye, my good La Sarte?"

Monsieur and La Sarte got on admirably, both preserving their own dignities, and talking together of Faye. Jonquille and Monsieur did not suit so well. Jonquille was respectful to his old master; but he was secretly resentful, and shunned Monsieur. Jonquille's fine temper was giving way. He had not La Sarte's faith nor her clear conscience. He inwardly raged at his own impotence. He was moody, and herded with the bitterest of the Girondists who were left in the Luxembourg waiting their reward.

But, notwithstanding, Jonquille would come when his mother called him, suffer her to smooth his ruffled plumes, and would sing for her in the dusk, after the gaoler had read his awful list, and when the silent pause of watching for the event of the day was succeeded by a little buzz of conversation and laughter, and making of appointments for next day, among those who had not been called to keep a graver appointment.

"Yes, it was well I came," La Sarte said, with

satisfaction, to Monsieur and Jacqueline. " My boy has need of me to keep him in order. He was always restless and easily led away,—not a firm oak like Michel. And that Olympe, who is neither child nor woman, but a wild little monster,—holy Cécile ! she would never say a prayer were it not for my prompting, nor sit still for five minutes to mend her fine gown, did I not watch her."

La Sarte showed a deal of affection for Olympe, either because of the girlish passion for Jonquille which had brought her into this strait, or of La Sarte's liking for children, which she had in common with other good, strict men and women, who may yet be very stern to these children when grown up, and, in some measure, placed on a footing with themselves. Olympe was no better than a Brobdignag baby,—an overgrown child. She was everybody's plaything. Her volubility made the exclusives relax, as almost nothing else did, and her power of sharp retort, her gipsy-like independence and audacity, made her a great favourite. She would cry when her parents and Félicité were forcibly brought before her mind, but she soon let them slip out of her head again if she was let alone. She was not impressed by the solemnity of her position ; the volatility and carelessness of her nature seemed unconquerable. One of the prisoners, with whom Olympe had sworn a fast friendship, was called by the gaoler, and the girl was told he was to go to the Conciergerie. " Oh yes ! and where to-morrow ?" she inquired.

"To make acquaintance with that frank lady Madame Guillotine, of course. Truly, she needs no introduction."

The girl became blue with horror, and cowered down in the lap of "Grandmother," as she called La Sarte. But she soon recovered, and learnt but too cleverly to mimic the gross patois of the gaoler—a Biscay man—in his reading of the roll. Olympe's presence worked something of the spell of a child's unconsciousness; and such was her fellow-prisoners' experience of it.

Monsieur had acquired a habit of retiring early to his sleeping cell. Jacqueline had taken leave of him for the night, and was sitting in the long corridor beside La Sarte. She was occupied with La Sarte's remarks, but was at the same time watching the groups of gaunt men gathered together by the darkening windows ere the iron lamps that swung from the ceiling were fully lit. They were conversing and gesticulating while they looked out keenly through the dusk for the cunning, cruel moutons—those wolves in sheep's clothing,—prison spies, moving among them, seeking to entrap them in their dismal confidences and withering denunciations. There were also groups of pinched women, less attended to than formerly, leaving off their embroidery, and fretfully missing their chocolate; detached couples like Jacqueline and La Sarte; figures ranged against the wall weeping incessantly,—a few of them, like Josephine Tascher Beauharnais, solaced for the present by nervously shuffling and dealing packs

of fortune-cards, in the vain hope of getting a glimpse of the future.

All the occupations of the others were gradually given up, until the attention of the whole grew concentrated on a game played by a party of the younger men and girls in the centre. It was a gay harlequin scene on a dark stage. On several evenings previously it had been played at the same witching hour; but the mirth had never been so boisterous, nor had the game been carried on in such a public manner. Fantastic costumes, sparkling eyes, and chattering voices made up the medley. Here a beardless lad, who had been so happy as to enter the Luxembourg in the long cloak of a student, was ready equipped as an advocate; there a wild woman from the theatres, who had played in tights and mocked a man's voice hundreds of times, sat cross-legged in her "blanket ermine," patting her knees sapiently, and uttering monosyllables like a judge. Other girls and men were pressed into service as jurymen, audience, criminals, by a great effort preserving the necessary decorum, and every now and then violating the proprieties by loud asides such as "Me! I'm not like the mothers: I cannot knit without looking down;" "Take heed! or you will knock the tray from my head, Mimi,—I'm a pastrycook." Flaws there were in the drama; but they were the more irresistible sources of tittering through it all.

English spectators would have concluded it was a set of giddy young people preparing a month beforehand for Christmas mumming and theatricals, or that

the amusement bore reference to Allhallows Eve and its frolics ; for here, too, was a figure with sooty face and " horned head " lurking suspiciously behind the glib advocate. Alas for the young players ! it was the Game of the Guillotine !

The acting went on with great precision, save for the grotesque asides and the merry titters. " The prisoner is condemned," said the judge at length, with mock hollow voice.

Two tripping gendarmes, with blonde tresses escaping from their improvised red caps, led a girl, in her ordinary long train and uncovered head, to a corner where three chairs were peculiarly arranged. Over these stood a young man with his sleeves tucked up to the elbow. " We will dispense with the ceremony of removing the neckerchief," said a voice from the mass with admirable prudery. The girl stretched herself on the support, and laid her head down in profound silence. One of the chairs was thrown down with a crash, and the performance ended amidst clapping of hands and loud encores.

" Wasn't it a success ?" cried the girl, springing up, and coming forward with glittering eyes to receive the congratulations. " I did not derange a fold of my dress, Aglae. Did I not die gracefully, Henri ?"

" To a wonder ! but there was one fault," hesitated a dissentient voice.

" What was it ?" demanded several.

" The hair ought at least to have been cut across,

or plaited up à la guillotine. The national razor could not make a clean sweep among a fine mass like that."

"But I could not lose my hair, Henri, could I?" pouted the heroine, mortified almost to weeping at the slur cast upon her acting. "Then to plait it would take out the frizzle for the day, and I should be a fright; and that would be too much to pay for an exact model."

An emphatic murmur of assent followed.

But the censor stood his ground manfully. "I am distressed to wound you, mademoiselle; but that detail was not correct. I love correctness. I could shoot myself for a smaller error."

"I thank you, monsieur, for your critique: you should have been the incorruptible Robespierre," retorted Mademoiselle with some asperity.

"Yes, yes; he ought to have been Robespierre," chimed in the indignant fair ones, who valued their hair as highly as their head.

It was the master of the games, however, whose opinion was thus set at nought; and lest he should fulfil his threat, or throw up his onerous office, a little propitiation was astutely offered.

"It is big little Olympe's turn next, Apolline," suggested one; "I dare say she will not mind what she does with her hair."

"Assuredly not," responded another; "Olympe, the child, is as much of a monkey as a woman."

"Olympe," screamed La Sarte, with sudden violence,

"come to me. Leave off that horrible game ! I forbid it you."

"Oh ! no, no, grandmother," protested Olympe. "Anything but that; it is the finest and the newest we have had. I lured you and Madame Michel to that seat this afternoon, just that you might see how beautifully still I lie like a little dead cock-robin." She spoke the last words coaxingly.

La Sarte summoned Jonquille. "My son," she said, "bring away that unhappy child ; she will perhaps listen to you."

Even Jonquille demurred at the mandate. "Why, mother," he argued gloomily, "am I to deprive the baby of the most favourite of her diversions ? I admit it is a very horrible farce ; but when life, and even death itself, have become only a succession of horrible farces, why should I quarrel with one poor little farce more ?"

La Sarte let him go, and yielded herself for a moment to despair. "What shall I do," she said, "if my fine boy, who was ~~at~~ the first dedicated to the Blessed among women, should at last be as unfaithful as the rest ?"

But Jonquille in a little time came back smiling his old sweet smile : "Pardon, my old mother. The drama of the guillotine is now over for the day. I will withdraw Olympe from it to-morrow. It is bad for the girl ; for, let alone other morals, it encourages vanity. You are right ; I should look after her, since she is here, like you, on my account. Behold ! you did not,

after all, dedicate me to our Lady in vain, mother, when you and Olympe would die for me without a word, ungrateful dog that I am."

A few days afterwards, Jonquille approached Jacqueline and asked her to take a walk with him into the antechamber, where a number of the prisoners were congregated. "You must come, my sister," he said. "Do you not know that the people go yonder to see their friends who are in the Luxembourg gardens below?"

"But I have no friends, Jonquille."

"You have your best friend, Michel," replied Jonquille, reproachfully.

"I did not know that Michel was in Paris."

"Hold! Where should he be? He was not taken with us: he could do better. He is working for us out there, though it is little he can do for some of us. He has got into the accuser's office as a messenger, and he can see the lists the first thing every morning. Men are brought so low, that there are thousands who would give their very lives even for so poor a chance."

In the anteroom, where, in the days of the old palace, pages had squabbled, grooms and lacqueys had lounged and gossiped, and suitors had waited patiently, another kind of levee was now being held. The guests were standing outside, among the bare dripping trees and bushes, while the piercing November rain was falling, and the heavy mists rising from the Seine. The hosts were the prisoners within, who moved in

slow procession in front of the windows, and merged, here and there, into jammed masses. The communication was restricted to distant looks and gestures between those who stood a little up on the shore of time, and those who were already on the brink of the eternal sea, whose waves were dashing at their feet.

There was no jostling or clamouring for places, though a minute's pause was claimed by each prisoner, to scan the woe-begone figures in the gardens, and to search for a familiar face. There was no loud exclamation, no agony of grief, even when such face was found. The prisoners were done with these demonstrations ; dying men are too much in earnest for that. It was a quiet scene, with quiet tokens,—a finger put on the lip or pointed to heaven ; some ring or miniature held up, or the hand kissed to a little child in arms, were the only signs. Thus fathers parted from children, husbands from wives, sisters from sisters, and then drew back to give place to their neighbours.

La Sarte was having her look. She stood before a window in her conspicuous peasant's dress, with its associations of spreading pastures and rich cornfields, and the peaceful, plentiful farmhouse of the auberge at Faye. Her hands were clasped, and over one spare brown arm was her chaplet, attached to that very chain of Jacqueline's hair which she had received on her fête-day. She stood immovable, with her fine, unshaded face clear against the grey ; her lips formed into a smile not more serious than she was wont to

wear ; her velvet eyes fixed intently on a point without. Jonquille passed to his mother's side with Jacqueline, and the incongruous group stood complete for the benefit of the gazer in the gardens.

"There he is, below, by the clump of acacias." But Jacqueline did not need the information. She had instantly detected Maître Michel, his head and shoulders above the people ; but she was stupid or stubborn, for she gave no sign.

"Wave your handkerchief, my sister," commanded Jonquille.

Jacqueline obeyed, and after a second Michel, in his working jacket, waved his arm in return.

But Jonquille was not softened by her obedience. In spite of his deference to his old mother, he had come to regard all women as selfish and shallow. Such women as Jacqueline seemed to him only a little nobler in their selfishness and shallowness than others of their sex. It was true that Jacqueline had done Michel Sart great wrong in the beginning ; and that, in the inevitable taint and spread of wrong, she had perpetuated the injury. She had imagined that Michel had returned to Faye, to his beasts and his fields, his accounts and his labourers, because in her folly she had somewhat despised his straightforward, steady attention to the duties of his calling, in the great difficulties and trials of the time, and of his life. And she had so accustomed herself to this, that in thought she could not separate him from his plodding and his stewardship. With all her philosophy, magnanimity, and generosity,

Jacqueline did not yet know how to honour all manly work, and to honour it the more, the simpler, the truer, the more unassuming it was. The excuse was that she had been hardened by wrong done, and wrong endured, by morbid remorse on the one hand, and ignorant insensibility on the other. She thought it was because Michel's peasant blood was gross and slow, that with all his honesty and goodness he could still look after himself, submit to live and work on where he could no longer hope to save her. And now, when she was convicted of this ungenerous error, straightway she plunged into another. She was tempted to despise Michel for continuing at liberty, tamely donning abortive disguises, when a day might end the story of the family. If he had been like her, or even like Jonquille and La Sarte, and the rash child Olympe, he would have preferred to lie in the Luxembourg with Monsieur and the rest.

"Old Michel's locks are silver now instead of gold, mother," said Jonquille to La Sarte, as he closed an opera-glass which he had borrowed, and passed it on to his companions. "Your hair, maman, is as black as a black cherry, and that of my sister here is brown like a nut; but our Michel's will be whiter than the snowflakes next winter, if he live to see it."

The words recalled Jacqueline to her Maître Michel as she had known him in his lion-like mould and with his tawny mane. What had caused this sudden drying up of the sap of life, this converting of summer into winter, as if by a single stroke, in a man strong and

healthy? Jacqueline puzzled over the question anew as she sat silent by Monsieur.

Daily fresh prisoners came, nightly old ones drove away from the Luxembourg. The old ones did not care to know the new comers; eyes rested absently on the constantly shifting mass of faces; and brains were dizzy. Always darker, dimmer, and more like Hades grew the prisons, except when on the periodical Decadiés they became pestilential noisome hotbeds. Then men and women only laughed, skipped, and chattered, because they were delirious in the near prospect of immolation.

Jonquille Sart still survived, and still sang to his mother at vespers. Restless feet pacing up and down, sick hearts trying to lull their long-aching throbs of pain, listened wistfully to the mellow voice, the old familiar words and airs.

Jonquille was singing the evening hymn of Faye. La Sarte was beside him, and Olympe Durand was lying at their feet, as the tired girl would often drop down. As he sang he was aware of a stranger, a young girl, standing near and joining in the hymn. He had never seen her before: ordinary faces of strangers made no impression, but this was not an ordinary face. The complexion was purely pale, the features were clearly cut like La Sarte's, and the eyes violet like Jonquille's. She was tall and slender in figure, and wore an aspect of perfect health and serenity. Such a stranger in that place was like May blossoms in a slaughterhouse. Her dress, too, was to Jonquille peculiar, though, had he known, it was no

other than the costume of one of those Chapters of Canonesses attached to religious institutions, whose members were at liberty to mix with the world and adopt new ties and vocations. The Chapters, requiring noble birth, attested by the most unquestionable genealogies and multiplied quarterings, had necessarily been suppressed with the nunneries at the commencement of the Revolution. Still women wore the costume just as priests wore their serge. The gown was of black stuff, the corsage fitting tight to the bosom and finishing off at the elbows. On the white neck—whiter by contrast with the dress—was the gold cross of the Chapter. Falling in a softened cloud from the back of the head, and descending on each side of the face, thus relieving the straight lines of the figure, was a long veil of black lace.

This apparition was unlike any religieuse Jonquille Sart had ever seen. The lovely face had so much cheer in its noble sedateness, the expression was so frank and unrestrained, that Jonquille faltered and nearly broke down in the music.

"Go on, my brother," said the apparition in a rich, well-modulated voice, which retained all its natural ring; "or perhaps you will permit me?" Jonquille bowed. Then she raised the hymn again, singing it with a grave, sweet melody, which mingled with the man's deeper tones, and filled that portion of the corridor with enchanting music. The moment she had finished she held out her hand. "I ought to know you, since we have sung the *Angelus* together. In truth, I came resolved to know such of my fellow-

prisoners as would let me know them. I am the Chanoine Bathilde de Roure, of the Chapter of the Abbaye of St. Germaine-aux-Bois at Rheims. I am daughter of Madame the Countess de Roure, of Ormette. My mother is here. We were denounced to the maire ten days ago for attending, according to the conscience of my mother, the ministry of a non-juring priest, and for refusing to give information as to the holy man's retreat. We suffered much coming from the province, but we are more at ease here, where, alas! there are crowds no better off than we are." The tale was told confidingly, feelingly, but bravely and without any complaint.

"I was the Deputy Jonquille Sart, from La Maille, commissary for Section 12 of Paris; and here is my mother, La Sarte, the aubergiste of Faye," Jonquille answered, a little brusquely; for the young man's heart throbbed at the thought that the friendly, beautiful face, here where all men and women grew so horribly selfish, would turn from him in disgust at the intimation. The Chanoine might have mistaken him for an aristocrat in disguise, or she might have supposed him a royalist, and would now revolt at hearing his republican principles. But he was proud and honest, and could not address her on a false footing.

"Good," answered the pleasant voice, so full of modesty and consideration for others. "There are honest men of all opinions, because honest men may commit errors as well as rogues. You prove your honesty by being here."

"There must be a great many honest men then, Mademoiselle," objected Jonquille, with a slight smiling elevation of the eyebrows, and a great sigh of relief, as he glanced at the assembly of men of every complexion and shade of character.

"Yes; there are men with bits of honesty, large or small, everywhere," asserted the girl, so eagerly, that her long, wide veil fluttered over her face, and she had to sweep it back with a movement of the hand. "What are we that we should judge men's opportunities and temptations,—men with few talents given them, and many foes against them? You are republican, I royalist. If we had met in the world, we would have passed by on opposite sides of the way; we meet in prison to mount the tumbril and lay our heads under the same knife. Shall we, who have sung the *Angelus* together, waste the few moments of our acquaintance here in searching for the motes in each other's eyes—we who have beams in our own?"

"No, Mademoiselle; because you are a saint and an angel," declared the young man.

"Oh, fy then! you affront me. You think me a very unworthy, silly person," insisted Bathilde, with such evident sincerity and energy, that Jonquille took care not to repeat the offence.

"I will tell you what you are," put in La Sarte, in her homely, sensible way. "Aristocrat or not, you are a wise, good girl. You give my son a good lesson. You shame me, who have not reared him better,—although he is not nearly such a worldly philosopher

in his deeds as in his words," concluded La Sarte, relenting a little, especially after having blamed her clever son before a stranger.

"Nay, now, my old woman, you too mistake me," protested Bathilde again, with a perfect ingenuousness of tone. "What has a silly girl who has led a secluded life to say to an old woman who has been among wars, and toil, and sin these sixty years? You must pardon me, my friends."

Olympe awoke, leaning against Jonquille's knee, and having looked up for a moment in his kindled, entranced face, she made a bound of impatience. "I do not understand your idle talk; I go to play at ball with some of the people yonder."

Disconcerted by the interruption and Olympe's rudeness, Jonquille was about to apologise, when a feeble, frightened voice caused him to look round. It came from a tall, meagre, scared, middle-aged dame, who advanced towards the group. She spoke hurriedly: "What are you doing, Bathilde? You fail me, my daughter. It is time for our vespers. Heavens! we will have been negligent, forgetful, sinful reprobates; and where is the time for repentance?"

"I come, mother," replied the calm, reassuring voice, not reluctant, and yet not hurried. "Oh no! we are not too late; and you forget that all the heavenly spirits know you have not been wilfully slothful or sinful. Good-bye, my friends, we will meet again, and encourage each other, if we do not soon quit this doleful place. I have never had brother, or

grandmother, or wild young sister, that I remember," and she nodded kindly to each as she moved away.

"She is indeed a saint, an angel, mother," Jonquille repeated positively, the moment she was out of hearing, while he watched, wistfully, the airy wave of her veil as she threaded her way through the groups, supporting her mother tenderly on her arm.

"No, no, Jonquille," his mother discreetly assured him; "she is some good, noble girl. These nobles always win the palm from us when they are good; I suppose because they have to go through the eye of the needle first. She is indeed a blessed one, early ripe and ready for martyrdom."

"No, no, my mother," cried Jonquille, passionately; "do not tell me that the Revolution has made martyrs of such as she. I have had a hand in it, and if you say so you will drive me mad."

"Not the Revolution, or you, did it, my Jonquille; only God permitted it," corrected La Sarte, quietly, with a touch of Bathilde's refined beauty in her old, worn face.

Bathilde de Roure was one of that rare type of women who supply history with enthusiasts like Mère Angelique, or mystics like Madame Guyon. Madame de Roure was a votary of the Romish Church, and was now in the condition to which all churches of Romish principles reduce their vassals,—at least those of them of a certain temperament and in certain circumstances. Madame de Roure was a soft-hearted, cowardly, egotistical woman. She had been married when a mere child, and like many Frenchwomen of

her rank and day, had not had even a nominal connection with her husband after the first year. He was far beyond her in capabilities, both for good and evil; and he had never so much as thought of bridging over the gulf of incompatibility between them. An active-minded man, he had lived and died in the world. Madame had buried herself in his château, and, subsiding into a devotee, had become a mere tool in the hands of her confessor. The priest, whether by an ascetic and morbid nature of his own, or through craft and a desire to turn the implicit obedience of the Countess to selfish profit and his Church's aggrandizement, speedily reduced his charge to absolute slavery. She lived in her oratory, while her household was left wholly to the management, or the neglect, of servants. She only saw her family at intervals. Her nervous system rapidly gave way under the weary strain of perpetual *Aves* and *Credos*. By the devout of her neighbourhood she was regarded with unqualified forbearance, admiration, and even awe. It was Madame de Roure, and not her daughter, who was on the high road to canonization. With women like Bathilde, dogmatizing, infallible churches have ever found it hard to deal.

But if the mother was a slave, the daughter was free. While the one was tormented, the other was peaceful. Whence came the freedom and the peace no man could tell. She lived, like crowds of young women of her time and country, amid the thick mists of enervating and abject superstition. But the truth, which is so

mysterious in its action, had dawned like an inward light upon her mind and heart. It was this that lent an unworldliness and originality to her faith, and surrounded her with a halo which compelled people everywhere to regard her with affection and respect. Madame de Roure, now that she was deprived of her confessor, elected her young, guileless, fervent daughter for her guide and stay.

Jonquille, as well as Michel Sart, had adored his mother in her purity, righteousness, and devotion. He regarded her with that tender filial love which a French author has called the apprenticeship to all true love. To meet with another version of his mother,—a liberal, generous, youthful, intellectual, graceful, beautiful version,—and to hold intercourse with her now, when he was plunged into the darkness of hatred and despair, could not but produce a great effect on Jonquille. The Roman Catholic faith, in which he had been nurtured, and from which he had only wavered for a time, predisposed him to receive such influences.

Every time Jonquille saw Bathilde, he thought of Dante's Beatrice in the midst of mourning, lamentation, and woe. Bathilde was his Beatrice, his guardian angel, come to save him. He seemed to have known her in a former innocent, happy state of existence. His heart responded to every high and holy sentiment of hers as if she laid a cool, soft hand on his fevered, rebellious spirit. He learned to love her with surpassing love; it was a trembling bliss even to be beside her in the terrible prison.

CHAPTER XX.

COMMON CLAY PIPKINS—DEATH AN EVERLASTING SLEEP.

AS there no sound in France this black November but the clank of the guillotine? no sight but the flowing of blood? Were there no country places, fortunate in their seclusion, where country people still jogged to market, and clustered at night round the clear wood fire on the dogs, roasting chestnuts, warming ice-cold fingers, and opening gossip-bags? Were there no women who still laid little children in safe cradles, and lulled them to sleep with cradle songs? no bold lovers who continued to woo buxom lasses in homely, hearty fashion, with the one old, lawful, glad end in store? Ay, there were some such corners, else France must have perished outright in those days of terror.

One corner was Faye-aux-Jonquilles, though poor Faye would have its own share of the troubles yet. But Faye had at present the reprieve of ignorance. The people there wildly imagined that Jonquille Sart was still reigning paramount at Paris. Maitre Michel and La Sarte were supposed to be living in state with him, and it was understood that between them they would be quite able to deliver the soi-disant

Citoyenne, and the quasi aristocrat Monsieur, whom Faye had really missed. No doubt they would all return some fine morning to their own Faye in triumph.

The witty old woman Diane Ligny said nothing against this proposition, and Babette was deceived like the rest.

The auberge, though quiet, and free from visitors, was still a cheerful spectacle. How different it looked from the cold and dismantled Tour! A stately old woman sat spinning in the warmest nook, with La Sarte's cousin, a crooked, harmless figure, keeping her company; while Babette, erect and firm as a plane tree, bright though solid, and deep-toned as a clove carnation, moved about preparing the savoury leek soup for supper. The scene was like a lively streak of dawn athwart the gloom of the night.

So at least thought little Citizen Pepin. He was now constantly prancing about the auberge, though it had been for some time shut up as a house of public entertainment. He visited it as a friend on friendly errands, often bearing home Babette's exceptionally extensive purchases from his little shop, or conveying the result of the business he had transacted for Babette at La Maille. He would sometimes bring the journals, and read out in his nasal sing-song their interesting contents. He would even condescend to the most menial acts, such as filling Babette's pitchers, lifting the sacks for her convenience, and chopping the firewood more exactly to her taste than any other could do.

Babette accepted all these aids and attentions as no more than her due. She had, to all appearance, no intention of rewarding them, beyond, perhaps, being intermittently gracious to Citizen Pepin. And she uniformly fell into fits of shrewish severity and sarcasm when he took advantage of her condescension to use liberties, or even to hint at a closer alliance.

In general, little Pepin bore this waywardness with discreet patience. But Pepin was flesh and blood, and flesh and blood ultimately revolts at inconsistency and tyranny. He protested somewhat bitterly one evening, when he and Babette were in the entrance to the auberge, as he was about to leave. Babette and Pepin stood beyond the yellow glow of the room, with its beams rich in brown ham, and its walls gay in engravings, images, and porcelain. Their gusty, shadowy station had, however, its own peculiar charms and advantages. A flood of light from the half open door streamed midway across the entrance, startling the birds nestling in the eaves, and the mice which lodged in the wattled crannies. It revealed, too, the brightness and breadth of the home scene within, which contrasted well with the leaden sky, the dull, silent hamlet, and the leaves that, torn by the November wind from the trees of the chaussée, the thickets of the Tour, and the bocage itself, swirled and rustled in the entrance. An occasional candle in the little dormer windows of the cell-like upper rooms of the auberge twinkled down into the gallery where Michel and Jacqueline sat when their marriage was young, their

persons being reflected like luminous stars, in the draw-well, with its white sanded mouth, under the gaunt, bare elm tree. What felicity Pepin would have counted it to have owned one of these tiny ménages with Babette !

But Babette had accompanied the tradesman to the door for no purpose, or only for the selfish purpose of insinuating that she would gladly receive another consignment of almonds, to brew almond milk for the old Madame. All very well ; but when Pepin proceeded to pass his lean arm round Babette's waist to take merely the fair exchange for his almonds, Babette drove him away with such force that his elbow struck the wall and tingled with pain.

"Play of hand, play of villain !" quoted Babette, with ridiculous indignation ; "I have morals."

"And I also," retorted Pepin,—the more sharply that he saw his mistress laughed at his mischance. "You insult me, Babette : how long do you mean these insults to last ?"

"What mean you?" inquired Babette, with aggravating simplicity.

"Babette," said Pepin, working himself into a passion, "do you think that I will suffer you to mock me thus? Were I in Paris, in place of in this dog-hole of Faye for love of you, I might be one of the Generals of the Nation, or Director of the Republic. You are ungrateful, Babette. But my mind is fixed ; I will suffer it no longer ;" and Pepin, on tiptoe, was strutting off.

"Who wants you to stay? Go, if you have a mind," answered Babette, swift and inexorable as the lightning.

Citizen Pepin became heedless of the numb, dull pain at his finger ends; he desisted from scolding his impracticable mistress any further, and began, instead, to reproach her. "Is this the end of it all?" he demanded, in a tragic voice. "Is this the end of my following you, and serving you like a dog? Marlbrook would not have put up with it for these three and a half years. My little shop at your service! my very principles sacrificed to you! If the sans-culottes ever return to Faye, I am sure to be hanged without mercy." He paused, but there was no reply from his insensible mistress, and so he went on:—"I believe you and that scrag Mother Jullienne would dance the cancon round the fountain while I was being hung. The deuce! You women are either strong, beautiful tigresses, or lean, long-cheeked, ugly wolves. The messages I have gone for you," he continued, looking yet more pensive. "I brought you of my best, too, and you have given me scorn in return," Pepin summed up rapidly, and with crowning emphasis.

"You have served me, I grant," cried Babette; "but what of that? Who offered the service? and what is the service worth if it is given for a recompence? I have lived with nobles; but,—ah! you are a mean little wretch, Citizen Pepin."

"Very well, Mademoiselle Babette," acquiesced Pepin slowly, now wounded in the tenderest point. "It is true that I proffered the service; it is true also that I

am a mean little wretch ; for I shall proffer it again, probably, though you hate and despise me."

"No, I have had enough of men," Babette declared. "If I had my choice, I should live like a bachelor to the end of my days."

"You might have rejected me more kindly, at any rate," responded Pepin, a gleam of light from the door at that moment striking him and showing the tears in his eyes, "were it only because you are a woman."

Babette winced ; there was a rustling of her garments in the solitude. "Ah, well," she said, after a little, "I am wrong. I should ask you to forgive me. I am not worthy of a thought, my friend. I am harsh. My humour is morose. I have had my troubles."

"I know, Babette," Pepin interrupted her ; "but I thought that disappointments would have taught you to have more pity for another."

Babette shrugged her shoulders. "There are natures and natures, my son," she remarked placably.

"And I thought, too, that here was the end of my dream. But still the shop thrives, Babette." (The shop, in truth, like everything else in Faye, was at its lowest ebb.) "I would make you most welcome, and you would reign as La Sarte has done."

"No, no, my boy ; no more of that," answered Babette, briskly, but not unkindly. "It cannot be. I belong to them,—you comprehend ? You and I are but two common clay pipkins ; but we can help to hold their wine of life just as well as if we were porcelain, till death frees us, and gives us also wings."

"Hand to hand on it, and till death?" pressed Pepin, sadly, as a last test.

"Yes; hand to hand, and until death, I promise you," and she put her hand in his.

"I say not another word against it, since you have accorded me your confidence, Babette," submitted the foolish little citizen, manfully, and in resigned admiration of Babette.

Pepin spoke again, after a moment's pause: "There is only one thing, my friend—think no more of what I said of my miserable services. I smite my breast to think I should have been such a wretch. These poor services are my pleasure, my delight, Mademoiselle Babette, as well as my duty. Do not punish me for my folly by prohibiting me from performing them, and do not seek them from another, if you would not have me leap into the Mousse."

Babette was so profoundly touched that she did not reply for a second. When she did, it was with the unexpected suggestion, "Perhaps we do not understand each other; let us have an explanation." Had Pepin seen clearly, he would not only have noticed that she crossed her arms upon her chest, but that she knitted her low forehead, as if for the solving of a problem. "Your polite proposal meant that I should marry you, live with you in your pretty little shop, bear you children, and give myself up to you and them—is it not so?" Babette went decisively into the matter.

"Yes, and you have rejected me," explained Pepin, wondering, yet unable to hope.

"Certainly you must get another woman of the hamlet for that, if you will have it,"—so Babette disposed of that part of the subject. "But," she went on, "if you want a friend, Monsieur Pepin, one whom you can visit at all times, one who will reckon up your accounts, and look over your bargains; for I am well educated,—I owe it to my poor darling Mademoiselle,—no, Madame Michel, Madame Michel, you remember, Pepin?—it is not a bad name that, and she is still Dame de Faye,—how the balls run! —Ah me! Well, what was I saying? I will arrange your books, make sure of your profits, and get up your bad debts as well as any tradesman's wife of Paris. And if you want such a friend to nurse you when you are old, and to see that you get the last sacraments, if there are ever Messieurs the Curés and the last sacraments going again, and to close your eyes, my old friend,—why, then, if that is what you desire, I will think of it, Citizen Pepin," concluded Babette, unable to resist mixing coquetry with the concession.

"You are an angel, Mademoiselle Babette, and I am a man. I would have asked something different, something more human, perhaps. But let that pass. You give me a thousand times more than I deserve. I accept your offer, my Babette. I am your beau, your lover for ever," vowed Pepin, kissing the hand which could, at times, so well bestow a buffet.

Pepin was not sure but this was the best end, after all.

Marrying Babette, possessing her as his housewife,

might, perchance, have brought her down from her lofty pedestal in his imagination; but while she continued merely his friend, neither old age, nor wrinkles, nor infirmities would ever dethrone her. Thus the Dorindes and the Pierres aped the sentiments of their betters.

Next day an old woman, with her distaff in the bosom of her gown, went along spinning, and driving her red cow before her, from the banks of the Mousse, where, by dint of great assiduity, it had managed to get a few wisps or blades. She looked up, and began to wag her head gravely, as she approached the church-yard gate. It was closed, but clearly not for the preservation of property. The crosses were pulled up and broken into fragments, like the woodwork of the little church close by, and neither white ribands nor immortelles rested on the grave of virgin or patriarch. Over the gate was painted, in big, staring white letters, "Death is an everlasting sleep." Here was the explanation of the shut door. The old woman was very old, and brown, and shrivelled. To all appearance it could not be long ere she slept her everlasting sleep. The idea, however, seemed to fill her with lively dissatisfaction.

A second and younger woman, noticing the first, walked down the street and joined her. The two stood still at the locked gate, while the red cow went discreetly on to quench its thirst at the fountain trough.

"A fine thing now," said the older woman, "after me and my old man have lived together these forty

years, to tell us that when our time comes we are to fall asleep and not even dream of each other,—bah!"

"And my little son Alex," replied the younger, who was drawn for the army, and has marched to the ends of the earth, and who may be shot passing through some hedge and die in a ditch—they will tell me he will have gone to sleep and will have no awaking. I need not care to go to sleep, for I shall have no awaking either; and I suppose they would say I need not pray, because God is also asleep!"

"Death! if that were the case, what would the common people do?"

"For that matter, what would the great people do?"

"Ah! the great people have had their day, and now it is their night; the holy saints help them! I bear them no spite, poor souls! But, my faith! if they call this liberty, when they do not give us the liberty of another world, I would like better to want their liberty, I would!"

"The salt tax and roadmaking were not half so bad, not even purgatory and the dread of hell itself."

"No indeed! They still left us heaven, and the good God, and our Lord and Saviour, the Virgin and the saints, to interpose for us. One never knew where a blessing might not come from. But this sleep, it crushes us like lead."

"La Jullienne takes on worst of all for her baby. They say she will go mad if something is not done."

"Go! she was always a lunatic, La Jullienne.

What is her baby, which lay in her bosom for only a year, to my man, who has driven the cow there—the prodigal beast—with me, and helped to milk her too, and dug, and thrashed, and ate, and drank, and prayed. with me for nearly half a century?"

"Or to my little son, who kept the vintage so well, and was affianced to the good Jeanneton, the best girl in Faye. Oh ! well, it is hard ; but for Mother Julienne,—fy ! do not speak of her in comparison."

"La Sarte used to say, every one's trial was the worst trial to that man or woman."

"La Sarte knows ; she is a wise woman. I esteem La Sarte ; I wish her good luck of her stay in Paris with her son, the famous deputy. But La Sarte did not live with her man for forty-seven years. Father Sart died when the famous deputy was a baby himself, I remember. The honest man departed on the fête of St. Hilaire. Ouf ! I forget there is no St. Hilaire ; there is nothing but the sun yonder, and he goes to bed in his turn. They hold up that sleep as if it were a blessing. I don't want to sleep unless I am to awake again. Though I do have the rheumatism, I can bear it; for there are many things beautiful here, if only folk did not tell us lies."

"You had always fine courage, Mother Beaujeu, and La Sarte has still both her children," reflected the younger woman, in a complaining tone.

"Yes, and one of them a deputy at Paris, and the other the registrar to pay grand visits with her ; else La Sarte's tongue, wise woman as she is, would not clack

like the clapper of a mill." The old woman was strong-minded, but she could not allude to a friend's prosperity without a touch of sarcasm.

"More tongues clack than that of La Sarte, who can hold hers till the village thinks she has had a lesson from the Silent,"—so her companion defended La Sarte stoutly, having an idea of enlisting the deputy's boundless influence for the private soldier. "For me," she went on, "I could no more march like some of these women from La Maille, than I could fly like one of my own geese."

"St! my woman, that is the best of it. The men march to the wars, and the women take the affairs at home into their own hands. They will soon weary, the worst of the women, with sleep as the end of all. The men would suffer it to last a little longer, so long as they got their soup and their cheese, their cider and their tobacco, their fights and their glory. My faith! they are worse than heretics with their sleep; yet even my old man might bear it for a time, although he would soon want the old life over again, with all the wrong made right, and the good God to smile on him. But we, the women, have the longer sight, we have the faith, the love that will not let us rest with a taste of the good weather here. Our gorges rise at once against the sleep; we know better. We will soon have no more of it."

"I hope it is so, my friend, and that my son will live till then. But look you, there comes Mother Jullienne, whose son was only a little child."

The old gadding slattern of the hamlet was a sorry sight. Not only were her arms empty of the meagre child, but they were tossing distractedly about her head, from which she had torn her cap, together with handfuls of her grizzled hair. The bones were staring at each other above her hollow cheeks, and her ferret eyes were glazed and wild. "Why does that great beast Jullien not take up my child and give him consecrated burial?" she raged in a hoarse voice. "But Jullien is so swollen he cannot dig. I will rather scratch away the earth with my nails."

"Softly, softly, La Julienne, the child rests under the shadow of the church. There is no better grave in France now," said Mother Beaujeu.

"And he was but a little thing," added the other woman, grudgingly preoccupied with her own trial; "he had not worked for you, nor even spoken to you."

"Silence! or I strike you," screeched Mother Julienne. "What do you know of it, wife of Huc the younger—you whose Alex was idle many a time, and was turned back from his confirmation for killing quails when he should have been ringing the bells? Or you, Mother Beaujeu, whose old Simon is like a crab apple, and you and he spit at each other like cats? Ah! I have seen you, Mother Beaujeu, yoked side by side with an ox, and even an old grey ass, and your man driving you. No wonder you bray! You two would be well at ease to have your plagues sleeping for ever, and so would the whole world, for that. But my innocent little child, what do I know but

that if he had lived he might have been a great farmer, buying up the lands, like Maître Michel? And now that he is dead, to be told that he will never wake up again,—I tell you it makes me mad."

" You were always mad, La Jullienne; and there would be no peace in Paradise if the baby, or anybody else, got you there, unless you mended your manners. Our Lady forgive me for saying so to you in your mourning for the child, and forgive you also for judging us. What? Do you not think I love better the quarrels with my dear old man, than the compliments of the finest fellow in France, though he were a king? I will tell you a little story. When my mother was a little girl, she saw a lovely young lady of twenty, in a coach drawn by eight horses, riding to the house of her sister an abbess, with waggon loads of fine things after her. They called her Mademoiselle de Fontanges, and she was the favourite of a king. But she was wasted like the wax before a fire—hear you? and not with disease either. It was the poisoning affair; the foster-sister of my mother up in Paris knew all about it. The Chambers sat on it for three years. After the trial, thirty-six persons died for it, one of them a great Marquise,—that was a sight before the Marquises had their troubles like other people,—and all for wanting to give the King one love philtre, and for having given another to his Mademoiselle de Fontanges. I can tell you there is no laughing under the nose when one is the favourite of a great king. This one was going to die when my

mother saw her, and she always said the young lady looked so woebegone. It was all the same to the poor wretch whether she had been the favourite of a king or a peasant. She had not made her peace with God. It did not come easy to her, that repentance, though she reached her sister the abbess, and had the help of the great ecclesiastics. Beggars have died in barns with less dismal faces. As to the honest quarrels of me and my old man, La Jullienne, they are all to be settled at last. We shall know the best of each other, and how much we two old cross patches loved, and bore from, each other, when we dwell together like the angels, all our toils and sins past, up in the clear, peaceful blue sky yonder."

"And how dare you slander my Alex, you bad Jullienne? Did not he mend his ways? Did not the priest pardon him, and the good Jeanneton consent to marry him? Poor boy! his feet are sore marching out of France that he may be sabred or blown into the air, and I forbidden to appeal to the saints on his behalf. I did not object to his entering the National Guard and keeping France. Coward as I am, I would mount guard myself for the country. But how is he to keep France, away in Italy or Germany? and how is he to keep me and the ailing father and the little things if the Italians or Germans come here in his absence?"

"What is it? What are you gossiping about, good women?" suddenly asked a voice behind them, causing the disputants to spring asunder. A stranger had

joined them unobserved. He appeared a wayfaring, working man, in common coarse frieze jacket and knee-breeches, with great sabots stuffed with grass. His bold, brown, elderly face, shaded by his cap, looked sharply into theirs. He read the inscription on the churchyard gate, and leaning over, contemplated the desecrated inclosure. Turning again, he interrogated the women afresh. Mother Beaujeu had fine courage, and an obstinate belief in immortality, but she shrank from a profession of her faith to a stranger on the high road, which might involve her going before the commune, and riding to La Maille in a cart with her hands tied behind her.

"We contemplate the dwellings of the dead, citizen, and speak of them. We may do that, I hope?"

But La Jullienne was frantic. "Not at all, citizen; the old traitress lies. We lament the old faith and the old rites. I want up my child, who was buried here without consecration, and I a good Christian."

"And you a good Christian?" repeated the questioner, looking at her with knitted brows.

"Do you hear him?" whispered Mother Beaujeu to her friend; "he is a spy of the commune."

"No, no. I have seen him before; my eyes are younger than yours; I have my suspicions; let us wait!" answered the wife of Huc the younger, under her breath.

"My little child buried like a dog!" moaned Mother Jullienne.

"My poor woman!" exclaimed the man, stepping

forward, his manner and tone undergoing an entire change; "dost thou not think the good God who made both little children and dogs knows the difference even when they lie under the sod? Our Lord and Saviour, who took the little ones in His arms, is He not ready to receive them still? Can He not see when you are cruelly afflicted, and are deprived of the power to bury and seal the young, or the old either, with holy words and signs?"

"It is our Father Hubert!" cried Mother Beaujeu and the others together, and they pressed up to him, eager to take his hand and ask his blessing, quite regardless of attracting attention from hostile eyes. "Our priest, you have kept your promise. Oh! we are glad you are here again to tell us of the friends who do not change or die any more than the great God; for it is dreary, dreary, this creed of everlasting sleep. It may be very well for the men, or those of them who are able for the triumph and glory, such as it is; but for those women who cannot change themselves into men, it is a very poor and heartless thing."

"I am come back because I promised," said Monsieur Hubert. "It is not meet that the shepherd should be absent from the flock when it is given over to wolves, though you know the law forbids me to be here."

"Oh, never mind the law," said Mother Beaujeu. "They are always making new laws. What is law to-day may be treason to-morrow. But there is a Divine

law which remains like the stars in the sky; is it not so, our pastor? That is the law for us women, and for the men too, if they only had the heads to see it. Will you do an old woman the honour of coming home with her, Monsieur le Curé?"

"No, La Beaujeu," said the wife of Huc, "your man is too old to protect him; and though my Alex is gone, my brother Bartelemi lodges in the house. You will come with me, Monsieur le Curé?"

And Mother Jullienne, now quieter and more resigned under the Curé's words, put in her claim also to Hubert's presence in her house.

"You are too good, my children," said the Curé, naming them all softly. "I did not know how good even the worst of you could be when my presence might bring ruin or death into your families."

"Did you not hear us say we would have back the salt-tax and the road-making; that we would die of famine, rot away with fatigue and neglect, risk being abused by the nobles even, rather than be condemned to sleep like the beasts that perish?"

"I render thanks for it, with all my heart, to God and to you. But I am going on to Croix. The farmer there wants a stout labouring man to thrash and to feed his beasts through the winter. You will see whether I cannot work as well as preach. I shall be near you at Croix, and you will send for me whenever you are in distress, else I will never forgive you; you comprehend?"

They knew that Monsieur Hubert was a true aristocrat.

And thus this season, when women were performing the most of the field-work, Maître Chaufour, at Croix, had a working man who toiled among the foremost, though he and his wife were almost reverential to him when strangers were not by. And this working man was always prepared to go down to Faye and the neighbouring hamlets, to bestow his skill on those who suffered from the maladies which continued to desolate the country, until hardly a death-bed, far or near, was without the presence of his composed, commanding, benevolent countenance.

CHAPTER XXI.

DEATH THE VISITOR AND DEATH THE EXECUTIONER.



ONE morning in the month of November, so crowded with events, Monsieur tried to rise from his bed in the Luxembourg, but fell back incapable of renewing the effort. A deliverer was at hand to interpose between him and the ruthless Tribunal,—a deliverer with whom even Robespierre, in the terrible strength of one idea, could not cope. His health had been failing ever since his removal to prison, and now the blow was descending which would save judges and executioners any further trouble with him.

Those old aristocrats mingled marvellous self-abandonment with marvellous self-command. Their faculties were alert to the last. At least Monsieur's mind continued wonderfully active and collected. When the room was vacated by his chance companions, he sent for his old countrywoman, La Sarte, and his daughter. On their entering he removed his nightcap, with a feeble hand, to indicate the distinction between him and the Republicans, and to apologize for giving them the trouble of coming to him.

Jacqueline, mute and tearless, took her place like a statue by his pillow.

La Sarte anxiously ejaculated, "Lie down, Monsieur, and cover yourself," and could not assume her functions as a nurse till he had done so. Then she lifted up the limp, chill hand, and felt the pulse, and looked into the eyes, and saw that a glaze was stealing over their brightness. That was enough. She cast a deprecating glance at Jacqueline as she whispered to the dying man and he to her; for the sharp pain was clutching at him, and fast sucking the life-breath out of his breast.

Doubtless death was different in the Luxembourg from death in the Tour of Faye. But even in the great prison, constantly emptying out its inhabitants to death, the last enemy was avoided save by frenzied men. Doctors visited the corridors and cells, endeavouring to avert the presence of Death the visitor, that Death the executioner might have his due; and where the presence could not be averted, a certain respect was paid to the messenger who came direct from the God whom none worshipped.

La Sarte knelt down before Monsieur's bed. "My dear Monsieur, let me bring one of the priests. Though we cannot get the viaticum, the offices of confession and absolution are still theirs and ours."

Jacqueline shivered and laid down her head on the pillow beside her father's. She made no further lament, that she might cause no disturbance.

"I am dying, after all, like a rat in its hole," said Monsieur, with a strange blending of relief and regret. "I should like to die at least dressed as a gentleman."

Anxious to gratify him, the women, although with

difficulty, owing to his exhaustion and pain, dressed Monsieur in his velvet coat and cordon bleu complete, while he tendered many apologies for the trouble.

"Tell Madame," he said, faintly enough, on recovering a little from the exertion,—"tell Diane de Ligny that as I dressed to meet her first, so I dressed to face the King of Terrors on a poor bed in a dark cell, when other men were favoured to face him in full day, and in the open place where my king faced him."

"My Monsieur," said La Sarte, in solemn, loving consolation, "God disposes. What signifies the mode to him who goes to glory?"

"What signifies, if he go to glory?" questioned Monsieur.

"Monsieur le Baron, you know that for a man who is penitent, and who dies fulfilling the last ordinances, and receiving the last rites, there are (our Lord and Saviour be praised for it!) salvation, sanctification, and glory, in different measures, according to the capacity of the person to receive them."

"Pardon me, La Sarte," answered Monsieur, very politely, "that is the very thing I do not know. Indeed I know nothing. I am not an infidel. Faith! I know less of the truth of infidelity than of the truth of religion. But I am a sceptic. This is what we have reduced ourselves to, we philosophers,—to 'the great perhaps' of that sad beast with a man's soul, Rabelais."

La Sarte was grieved, but she was neither startled nor staggered in her ministrations. She had watched by many a French death-bed.

"My Monsieur, is there nothing in all the Bible your heart can lay hold of and cling to as Divine?"

Jacqueline crept nearer to her father—crept nearer as if to warm the dead embers of his faith.

"There is but one thing, my aubergiste," Monsieur admitted, candidly. "I say to myself, But who created the Central Figure, and his influence on all the rest? and I cannot answer the question. Did men create Him? The conception was sublime as none other of theirs, save in a remote way, and as taking colour from this figure. Did He create Himself, his words, his deeds? Then the difficulty is only shifted. He must have been supernatural."

"Truly, Monsieur, and supernatural is the strength He gives his poor followers to die for Him at his word."

"Stop there, La Sarte." Monsieur had still strength to detect a weak point in the argument. "I have seen philosophic men and women, who believe in nothing but themselves, die as bravely as the bravest Christian. The votaries of many religions which you call false die gladly by hundreds and thousands for their creeds."

"Why, my Monsieur, for the last, it is because every religion, every faith, has a grain of the true religion in the very fact that it is a religion. God has ordered man to worship, to believe in something greater, something better than himself; and even when man degrades him self, and dishonours the good God, by bowing down to stocks and stones, it is because he believes, although he has distorted and debased his strength. As for

those who only worship or believe in themselves, our God still made them, though they know Him not, and their virtues are from Him, though they own Him not."

"Is that your logic, La Sarte?"

"No, Monsieur, it is only the wit of a poor woman. But we will let death alone, my Monsieur. My God, and the God of Jacquette, and of the many men and women who are not philosophers, or infidels, or pagans, is the God of life, not of death. Ah! my Master, if you can tell me that the stocks and the stones, and the poor spirit of man in him, can make a man anything like the Figure you talked of, the kingly servant of all for a lifetime, then I shall admit that I have been mistaken, and that we, his followers, have all been duped. Nay, nay, I will still throw myself on his mercy, and pray to Him to forgive our great sin, and to raise up fresh followers like unto Himself."

"La Sarte, are there not words like these in your priests' Bible—'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian'?"

"Not almost, but altogether, Monsieur, except these bonds."

"Ah! it is too late, I can do nothing."

"But, Monsieur, there is nothing to do. He has done it all. The greatest Christian as well as the least, and the oldest as well as the youngest, must owe all to Him."

"I have never been accustomed to owe so much."

"But yes, Monsieur; you good nobles knew at least this text, 'It is better to give than to receive.' Can

you not bring yourself to submit to a greater Giver,—a Giver who, in spite of you, has already given you all you ever had—life, rank, courage, truth, wisdom, the love of wife and daughter, and the poor service of such as I?"

"In one light, yes. And they were much—too much; I feel now I did nothing for them," confessed Monsieur, in grave deprecation.

"So we all feel. What we do for Him, He does in us and by us; we are nothing in ourselves."

"You are mystical now, La Sarte. It is too late."

"Monsieur, when you were a soldier in the wars, had you never a noble commander whom you followed everywhere, and could have followed anywhere, to whom you trusted everything, and whose skill and not your valour fought the battle for you, you being not ashamed to accept the boon and pay him homage?"

"Ah! yes," accorded Monsieur, his eyes lighting up for a moment with old chivalrous recollections; "I knew such a man, and all France mourned for him when he was slain."

"My Monsieur, can you not acknowledge another Commander, who fought the battle of sin and death for you?"

"God knows I might, perhaps, if it were not too late. But I did something for my marshal, La Sarte. I wore his uniform, and rode after him before all the world; and once or twice, when the battle seemed desperate, I made some little rallies, I struck some little blows which helped him, great as he was."

"Monsieur the Baron, you can still wear another Commander's uniform, and strike a little blow for Him, if it be only in dying under his colours."

Monsieur meditated long. At length he said, "As you put it, La Sarte. It may not serve me; I do not dare to ask it should; but it may serve other men. In this obscurity of death some lights show bigger and brighter; and I desire to die telling the truth. The philosophers will say I have turned hypocrite, coward, fool. So the courtiers, who remained to dice and dance, and scheme for place and preferment, when we went to the wars an age ago, before I became philosophic, said we were fools to choose the danger, and the empty honour. Bid a priest come, my good La Sarte," continued Monsieur: "I seize the last occasion to show my colours. Let him tell his errand to those of my friends whom he knows."

Four hours later a priest, in a low voice, communicated to what quality were left in the Luxembourg, the information that Gabriel, Baron de Faye, who had departed half an hour before, died in the faith of the Church, deplored his scepticism and his other sins, and accepting the gospel, and believing it, in his last moments, to be true as life and death. The priest added that he made the statement at the late Baron's request.

The Messieurs were not, to all appearance, much edified by hearing of the Baron's recantation. They shrugged their shoulders, took pinches, in an underhand way, of what snuff the Revolution had left them,

and remarked among themselves that De Faye had for a long time been getting imbecile.

So it was to the philosophers ;—how seems it to us ? Was it that Monsieur, like Montaigne, amid all his splenetic philosophy, retained a loophole by which he could in his dying moments lay hold of Christianity ? Or was it only a touch of that terrible French vanity which tempted even Robespierre, a year later, to decree that there was a Supreme Being, that France should acknowledge Him, and establish a fête in his honour ? Ah, let us not pick holes in poor humanity's coat of many colours. Let us deal tenderly with Monsieur's characteristic rag of repentance, as we cry mercy on all our own rags of repentance.

Jacqueline was fatherless in the gorged, surging prison. Strange hands clasped hers, strange faces congregated round her, and strange voices would even tell her that they envied her, because her father had died a natural death in her dutiful, loving arms.

She was sensible of the force of the consolation. She felt also the balm of wiser, more healing words addressed to her by La Sarte and Bathilde, though they were spoken to a poor, stunned creature. But now her occupation was gone ; henceforth she wandered purposeless up and down the prison.

One winter afternoon Bathilde and Jonquille were standing together at a window, neither smarting under the cold, nor groaning at their misery. Her face was as if she were inspired ; his was radiant.

Up came Olympe Durand with the swinging step

of a boy, but her swarthy face flushing with a girl's flushes. "Have you heard the list to-night? Oh! I listened to it at the grating. The name of Bathilde de Roure is in it."

Jonquille uttered a short, sharp cry, and flung up his arms in horror. Bathilde only looked round with startled, dilated eyes, and said, hurriedly, "I must go to my mother."

Just at that moment the gaoler entered with the list. Some instinct impelled Jonquille to put out his hand and detain Bathilde till it was read. The man spelled out the names slowly and mechanically in the silence, which was broken only by a rustle here and there, or a little suppressed sob from a companion, the persons principally concerned simply rising and gliding off to make their few hurried preparations. He sometimes stumbled in the articulation, and was once or twice arrested by a cough; twice he commenced with a Ba—, each time striking into Jonquille's heart; but instead of Bathilde it was Baptiste and Barbe. The gaoler stopped, and folded up his paper. No Bathilde de Roure was called.

"I played you a trick," cried Olympe, saucily. "Did I not manage it cleverly? I wanted to see how you would look when the order for departure arrived."

"How dared you do such a thing, Olympe?" cried Jonquille, furiously; "you are a heartless ape!"

Olympe looked up with a half-defiant, half-terrified expression; but when she saw the scowl on Jonquille's face, he crouched down, and burst into passionate weeping.

"It was very wicked of you, Olympe," said Jonquille; "you do not know the injury you might have done."

"No, she does not know," pleaded Bathilde, kindly, with nothing more than a little tremor in the voice, "and therefore you should not be hard on the child. Do you know, little one?" she said to Olympe, "I was brought up too gravely to play tricks, but I often wished I had the gaiety to play them, and some one to play them with. I had a tame squirrel once, and my mother had to send it away, because, though I had a dancing-master, I would take my lessons from the little creature."

Olympe stared at Bathilde, slowly shutting and opening her round black eyes as she retreated a few paces, and then returned.

"I forgive you, Mademoiselle," she said, with great dignity; "but you, Jonquille, never!—never! I will never speak to you again!" and she walked off to La Sarte, and attached herself closely to the old woman for the next two or three hours. She was quieter and more docile than she had been before, clinging to grandmother as her only friend, and refusing to look at Jonquille.

"What a funny one!" ejaculated Jonquille, laughing a little.

"Ah, but you hurt her," alleged Bathilde; "how pale she grew! and how her lips quivered!"

"I am sorry," said Jonquille, a little remorsefully; "she did not merit it from me. Alas! the poor child is here from a child's fancy for me. She is a wild, neglected, overgrown baby. Félicité was better propor-

tioned, but there was not a fraction of her so true."

"Who was Félicité?" inquired Bathilde, curiously. Jonquille had spoken inadvertently. He had the greatest repugnance to discuss Félicité Durand with Bathilde de Roure. In the light of Bathilde's noble truth and generous self-denial, he thought of Félicité with an insensibility to every feeling but that of impatience. At this moment he entertained an angry contempt for the girl who, even at sixteen and a half, had played with her lovers as a child plays with its toys. He was dissatisfied with himself; he fancied his relation with Félicité had degraded him, and he felt ashamed even of what had been the sincerity of his love for her.

"Oh," he replied to Bathilde's question, with as gay an air as he could assume, "Félicité Durand, Olympe's sister,—a beautiful, frivolous girl I once knew."

As he said this he did not look at Bathilde, but receiving no reply, he lifted up his eyes and encountered her open, steadfast, puzzled glance, and his manner was transformed instantly from carelessness to seriousness. He was forced to tell her the truth. "I was so mad as to love her distractedly, and she repaid me as I deserved."

"You have reason, Monsieur," commented Bathilde, with some scorn in her tone. "If you loved a vain girl for her beauty, why should she not turn and punish you? Vain girls are not as harmless as butterflies;" and she walked away.

Jonquille stood abashed. He cared more for the opinion of Bathilde than for that of the whole world.

After a little while Bathilde came back, looking shy and troubled as she rarely looked. "Pardon me, Monsieur," she said. "What right have I to blame this Félicité, or any girl? I do not know the weaknesses of girls any more than the ways of men. I, who have lived as in a convent, have yet been often flighty and selfish. I am grieved, Monsieur Jonquille, that I should have blamed you. I have learned to be austere; this prison air, I think, makes me peevish."

"Not another word, Mademoiselle," Jonquille entreated eagerly; "you had reason; I know it better than you, now that the fire of unworthy love is in ashes."

It was well that the pair understood each other.

Like some ghastly foreshadowing of a great plague, like the leering spectre of a monstrous iniquity, was Olympe's clever trick. The gaoler read first, on the following night's list, the names of Citoyenne Honorée Bathilde Roure, and Citoyenne Françoise Roure, ex-Countess de Roure.

The poor, timid, scrupulous soul, who was always frightened that she had not done the duty which had been done for her many a century before she was born, rose feebly to obey the awful summons. "But what shall we do, Bathilde? we have not said our vespers;" and she wrung her shadowy hands at the irrevocable omission.

"Calm yourself, my mother, we will say them in the Conciergerie to-night ; to-morrow night in heaven."

Jonquille trembled in every limb. Bathilde was self-possessed and composed. "Once more, until we see each other again, my friends," she said, using the same phrase she had used at parting on the first night they had met. "We shall meet again, and sing the song of the redeemed." She spoke in a full, clear voice.

"You are a woman," said Jonquille, in almost incoherent despair. "And I, a man, can do nothing. I helped to bring you to this pass."

"No, Jonquille," she answered. "It was God who brought us all here, like Joseph to Egypt, to save France and the world. Come with us to the door, my brother ; come to the last."

"But," exclaimed Jonquille, suddenly recollecting himself, and putting his hand to his brow, "you never called yourself Honorée, and you were Chanoine of Rheims : there is some fatal mistake."

"Oh ! hush, for mercy's sake," she whispered, imploringly, clasping his arm, "I trust you as I trust myself. There is a mistake, but no one guesses it except you and me. My poor mother would go mad without me ; I cannot let her go alone. And what does it signify, a few days more or less ? I have a cousin of the same name in the Abbaye ; I am not sorry to die instead of her ; her husband is not summoned, and she has little children down at her château. Who knows but God may spare her to them by a miracle ?" She stopped and looked inquiringly into

his face. "Ah, do not be jealous, my friend; life is precious to me too. Perhaps I could not die for my cousin, were it not that I am the only child of my mother, and she is alone. You will not tell, Jonquille, for I have trusted you, and you are my second self; you love me, my brother, and it would break my heart if you failed me; but I have no fear of you. Come with me to the last."

He walked beside her spellbound as in a dream, seeking to say something, but unable to say it.

"Take his arm, mother," she said; "here is a son for you, to support you in your last journey." And Madame leaned upon him, murmuring to him as they went about being a good son to his mother, and not forgetting his vespers. She fell fainting on his neck at the door.

Bathilde stretched out both her hands to him as the gendarmes took charge of her mother. "Kiss me before I go. If we had been spared in this world, do you not see the world would have come between us and parted us? We part only to meet again, and dwell together as angels yonder."

He stood looking out after her when she was gone. He could not see her mount the tumbril, place her mother's head on her shoulder, and kiss her as if she were the mother and her mother the child. The door was shut in his face; but he stood till a gendarme shook him rudely and asked, "Do you want a ride, my fine fellow? You will not get it to-night now, but you will have better fortune to-morrow, perhaps."

Jonquille went back to the corridor, and paced up and down there, with little intermission, for the next twenty-four hours. All the reason he would give for his conduct was, that it was to keep him from going mad. Remonstrance and entreaty were useless. The gaolers threatened to knock him on the head; while the poor prisoners, coveting a little oblivion, reproached him. La Sarte and Olympe came and looked up mutely in his face, but all in vain. At the close of the next day, he sat down and covered his face with his hands. For more than an hour he remained motionless, and then raised his head before his mother had detected the rattle of the empty carts returning from the Place of the Revolution. His face was so wan, so changed, notwithstanding the smile upon his lips, that La Sarte could have sworn it was the spirit of her son, and not his living presence that was before her. "She is in heaven now, mother; I will mourn her no more. I have been for her with these wild beasts, a night and a day. But now I go to be in heaven too."

Olympe had stolen up to him, her face white and subdued. She stretched out her hand, put it round his neck, and said, "How sorry you have been for Bathilde! I wish I were like her."

"Chut! you foolish child, how could you be like Bathilde?"

"I don't think she would have said so," answered the girl, quickly.

"No," he said, musingly; and then added, "Then be like Bathilde, my little pet. But, Olympe, you must not

make me angry with you again, for there is no anger with her now."

"Jonquille, there is one thing I want to ask you."

"Well, child?"

"Will you and grandmother and I go together?"

"I cannot say, but it is probable, as we were put in together under the same charge. But what do I say? They will not hurt a child like you. The citizen your father will interpose."

"No matter, Jonquille. But promise me another thing,—will you ask them to let you tie up my eyes with your own hands, and lead me to the steps as you would have done Bathilde? You know you cannot want the place for her now."

"How you do speak, little one! And yet I know not how to refuse you."

"Do not refuse me. We will stand very near La Sarte. The dear old grandmother! she has not scolded you one word to-day, Jonquille, though you have been rude. You squeezed my hand so when I took hold of yours, that the blue mark is still on my wrist. You did not mean it, Jonquille?"

"No! I did not mean it!" And he took up the bruised wrist and kissed it, as one would kiss the hurt of a child.

"Be quiet, chatterbox, you tease my boy!" interrupted La Sarte, as she stroked the damp hair off her son's brow.

"Let her alone, mother; I do not think she will tease me again."

"We will keep near La Sarte, who is so good and kind," resumed Olympe, speaking confidentially, as if she were anticipating a pleasure excursion. "We will be sure to get into heaven with her."

Jonquille was right. Olympe teased him no more. Though he was a little absent-minded, and his eyes bore more or less of a strange far-away expression, he was gentle, for he had attained on earth to an unearthly peace.

Bathilde had not long to wait. Within this month of November, Jonquille, La Sarte, and Olympe Durand, were removed together to the Conciergerie preparatory to appearing before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

"Oh, take me too! My mother! my brother! Let me go with them, my gaolers!" cried Jacqueline, piteously.

"Against orders," said the gaolers, stolidly.

"You must live for Michel and for that other life," said La Sarte; "even the Tribunal will spare you on that account. The Terror will not last for ever."

La Sarte took the old hair chain and chaplet from her neck: "You gave me this long ago; oh, my poor, poor Demoiselle, I dare say you have forgotten it. But I have never forgotten to pray for you, and Michel, and Jonquille. And not a prayer is uttered, any more than a sparrow falls to the ground, without His knowledge. You will put it round the néne's neck, my daughter; you will keep your own gift in remembrance of the old peasant aubergiste whom you were fond of; and it may help to bind up your poor broken heart, and rest your

dizzy brain,—for ah, it is easier to die here than to live ! But you used to be a brave, generous demoiselle, as Michel was a brave, dutiful man, and you would have asked the most difficult task. Is it not so, my child ?”

When the little party were led before the Revolutionary Tribunal, Jonquille, though greatly changed, recovered some of his old fire. He looked round keenly among his old associates to see if there was any friendly demonstration on behalf of him and his companions.

Not one of Olympe’s relatives was present ; Jonquille sorrowfully conjectured that Citizen Hercules, in his confirmed fright and incapacity, was still only trying, in a roundabout way, to find out which of the prisons his poor daughter had been conveyed to.

As for himself and La Sarte, there was Michel, in his workman’s blouse, standing well forward, close to one of the clerks at the table of the Tribunal. Staid Michel, who could not get at his wife, was here leading a forlorn hope for his mother and brother. He was only too likely to be consigned to share their fate, but he would not provoke it, or draw it down on himself wantonly. La Sarte saw her elder son, and looked on him with love and pride.

Then Jonquille gazed around to distinguish old familiar faces, and note the changes. The first were not numerous, the last were notable. This Tribunal was not the Convention ; but here, too, was reflected the great change which had come over France. The old men, full of classic dreams, proud, hot-headed, vehe-

ment, reckless, but yet generous and exalted in their destructive tendencies,—the artists, philosophers, professional men, and nobles, with whom Jonquille had been allied, were all gone. The early men of the Revolution had often boasted that the Tree of Liberty should be watered with its enemies' blood. But now it spread its roots in more "mingled gore,"—it was drenched with the richest life-blood of its planters.

The most infamous court the world has ever seen was this Revolutionary Tribunal. The Star Chamber, the Holy Vehm, the Inquisition, were innocent compared to it. It consisted of six judges and a jury, with nominal pleaders on both sides. There was always a crowded, tumultuous audience. The Tricoteuses and the old "slaughterers," who continued to attend, and dip rags in the flowing blood on occasions,—their grizzled heads garnished with blonde tresses bought from the executioner with the spoils of great houses,—were always well represented in the court. For what playhouse could approach the Tribunal in tragedy?

As president of the court sat the last and most hated of the Jacobins, Maximilien Robespierre. This green-complexioned, lean man, who was constantly biting his nails and hiding the twitching of his fingers, was here to teach men an awful lesson. He has found his historians, and they record truly that this was he who gave up his Arras judgeship rather than sentence one man to die;—that he was the daily associate of Madame Roland, Barbaroux, and Pétion (and they at least were incorruptible);—that he had a strange fasci-

nation for women. For not only the old madwoman, Catherine Théot, who called herself the Mother of God, and prophesied before her master, but women at once virtuous and intellectual, were ranked as devotees of Robespierre. Poor devotees! But, on the other hand, this was the man who had as strange a power of repulsion for natures unlike his own, as most women's were. For women helped largely to load him with the peculiar obloquy which gives his name a bad pre-eminence. Women followed him hissing, spitting, cursing, on the dreary way which he himself at last trod in the wake of the multitudes he had sent to the guillotine. Thus beginning and thus ending, thus loved and thus loathed, there is but one reading of the hieroglyphics in which the man's history is written. The part of the anti-Christ of murder, of bloodthirsty relentlessness, was left to be acted by one who had lost all sense of personality, all love for humanity, and had become the incarnation of an idea, a dogma.

But Robespierre was now flourishing. There was a tremendous singleness and directness in his rod of iron, which overpowered and paralyzed all wider, more yielding sceptres. Couthon, a paralyzed cripple, who nursed and fondled a greyhound in his withered bosom, kept him company on the tribune; and so did red-haired, brutal Tallien, with whom a woman, neither lofty nor pure, was now going through the nursery tale of Beauty and the Beast, as heedless of its moral as the children.

The accusation was read, stating that Jonquille Sart

was a Girondist, and had been engaged in conspiracies against the existing government. Something like an "examen" ensued, and questions were asked at random both by the judges and the jury.

"Are you the person indicated here?" to Jonquille.

"I am a man and a Frenchman."

"Enough of your wit. Were you a deputy in the Convention of the year 1 of the Revolution?"

"I was deputy for La Mousse in the year of the Lord 1793."

"We recognise no such calendar. Were you anything more?"

"I was commissary of the Section 12 of Paris."

"Clerk, write him down guilty of prevarication! Did you not vote as a Girondist?"

"I called myself of no party. I voted according to my conscience."

"The herring smells of the cask. We know what company he has kept."

The pleader beside Michel rose, and went into a formal statement. Jonquille's votes he alleged, had not brought him under the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, and he insisted on his innocence of conspiracy.

"Our time is precious," declared a judge, after half a dozen sentences. "We want no more of this. Our mind is made up. We are ready to vote unanimously that we find Jonquille Sart guilty on both charges, and are prepared to proceed with his condemnation. Let us go on."

There was a murmur of acquiescence. The Tribunal

had much on its hands, so much that it was about to split into four sections.

While the president was signing the condemnation Jonquille spoke. "Citizens, give me one word. You used to hear me in another place. You see the old woman and the half-grown girl at my side. Does France make war upon old women and children?"

"We will have no questions from a condemned person. Charlotte Corday was a woman. Read the women's accusation."

"Citoyenne Marie Sart, aubergiste at Faye-aux-Jonquilles ; and Citoyenne Olympe Durand, Rue St. Honoré, in league with the prisoner, and supposed to be infected with his principles." Had they anything to say for themselves ?

"My son Jonquille spoke for himself and me," answered La Sarte, staidly, in spite of her taste for making converts, under a dim feeling that a woman was not permitted to speak in a public assembly.

Olympe was bewildered. She could only say, "Ask Jonquille ; he knows."

"The accusation proven by the women's admission. Second sentence of condemnation. Remove the prisoners."

"Stay ! Citizen President, Citizen Judges. Hear me !"

It was Michel who spoke from his place among the audience. His intervention—indeed, all intervention —was so hopeless that Jonquille called out, "Michel, be silent."

"Communication between the prisoners and the speaker."

Gendarmes stepped to Michel's elbows.

"These are honest people," asserted Michel, standing square and grey like a rock among wild waves. "I should know them; they are my brother and my mother."

His boldness made an impression.

"My brave Michel," thought La Sarte. Her mind sped away, and rested for an instant on her village and her auberge. The great stove, with its casts of saints and their miracles, and its load of hissing chestnuts; the wooden gallery, with its look-down into the busy court on the people, cattle, and dogs,—she saw them all in a flash; heard the creaking of the clumsy bridles, the clatter of the sabots, and the ringing of the bells of the little church among the willows, where the rime was falling thick and white. It was but the vision of a moment. La Sarte looked up again, and saw the Revolutionary Tribunal, its men in riding coats and carmagnoles, and her son Michel dressed as a warehouseman or porter; and she heard his honest voice acknowledging her and Jonquille.

"What have you to say for them?" was the astonished inquiry.

"That La Sarte is a woman full of good works. You may send and ask any native of Faye if you do not believe me. And as for Jonquille Sart, I answer for him, that he did his best when he was in authority."

"A valuable security," sneered a bystander.

The tide was turning again with swift rapidity.

"Do you want to die with your fine family?" demanded a judge, with fierce flippancy.

"No, but to save them," replied Michel.

"But if you cannot save them, to die with them then?"

"Again, no."

"Why, my independent citizen—you who are such a family man?"

"I have a wife in prison," announced Michel, incapable of subterfuge, or thinking, perhaps, to melt these hearts of stone by the tale of his misfortunes.

"Ah ha! More friends among the conspirators? But you need not have too much care on her account. The nation has undertaken to provide for her, even to the expenses of her interment. A lively fellow like you might find another. You are ready to die?"

"No," persisted Michel, doggedly meeting the buffoonery which relieved the dark colour of the proceedings, in the interval during which notes were brought from the Committees of Safety and Security—twin satellites of the Tribunal—for the inspection of the president.

"The man is a caitiff. Are you afraid, Citizen?"

His appearance there was like fear; but the simple answer came, "I believe not!"

"What then binds you to this life which to you is made villainous?" The question was urged as much in inquisitiveness as mockery, and the arrested court interested itself in the investigation, while the Tricoteuses

stopped the click of their knitting-needles, and echoed sonorously, "What binds to this life?" The president looked up, with his thumb placed at a particular point in his notes, as the voice responded,—

"God. He gave me life, and I keep it for Him till He take it back. He may yet have work for me here. The question is not my pleasure, but His pleasure; not my will, but my use."

"He is a fanatic, a madman!" cried Michel's assailant.

The president rose and said, "The man is dismissed," and then sat down again, with an imperious wave of his twitching hands.

Robespierre was a Deist, not an infidel. He was enraged at the anchorless extremity to which Henriot and Hébert were driving France. Michel Sart's words were the one plea for God's great, common boon of life which he had heard in that court, where arguments blew from every point of the compass. So he, the greatest blood-shedder in France, liberated Michel for them.

"Michel is saved, God be praised," said mother and brother, thinking they took their farewell look of him, as another case was called.

The three were conducted from the court, Jonquille holding up the signal finger. Their places were found in one of the tumbrils. Mother and son, with the poor young victim, Olympe Durand, between them, sat in one of the rows of full seats in a line of carts guarded by mounted gendarmes. They were driven along the

thronged streets, already partly lit, to the Place of the Revolution. The life of the streets, even on this murky winter afternoon, was that of robust, many-coloured activity and gaiety, to eyes which had long seen nothing but prisons and death. But the activity and gaiety were more remote from these people, now so near their end, than the free, thoughtless games of childhood from care-worn men. The tumbrils drove as usual through the Rue St. Honoré; and as they passed her father's house, Olympe uttered a wailing cry of recognition.

"What is it, my child? It will soon be over now," said Jonquille.

Jonquille's eyes were looking very far away, until Olympe recalled him to the present. A fair, blue-eyed face peeped out from a well-known house. Seeing the occupants of the cart, its owner experienced stronger beatings of the heart than she had yet known, and fell back, distorted by convulsions. But Jonquille did not notice this.

In the Place stood the great machine, the crowd a little back from it, but a detachment of Tricoteuses in their chairs close at hand.

"Ah! Claude, Madeleine, our old beau commissary in the fifth cart! We have not seen him for long. What a fine head he will make! I am delighted I came to day to see our beau commissary once again. He does not see us, or else does not know his old friends. He is too high or too low,—they are all too high or too low who have to make a valet of Monsieur Coupe-tête. Is it not so, Madame la Duchesse?"

The prisoners stood beside the frame, while around them stretched the inner ring of gendarmes, with the broad belt of the unwearied mob beyond these again. Each prisoner in turn was called to ascend the steps of the scaffold. The Sarts and Olympe, having driven in the fifth cart, would have to wait a little.

"Do not look up, my child," Jonquille directed Olympe, for, pinioned as he was, he could not put his arm round her to still the beating of her heart at every rattle of the axe.

It was La Sarte who this time roused him from his reverie. "What is it that reminds me of Faye here, my son? Quick, look around and tell me?"

"The butcher Sylvain works the knife, my mother; the hand which has often broken our bread is to slay you and me."

"It is not that. Look farther, my old eyes are dim."

"Michel is here, mother; he has followed us, he is standing bareheaded yonder in the midst."

La Sarte made a motion with her bound hands; then she leant forward, and called out to the spectators standing just beyond the gendarmes, "Is there a pitiful soul in this place who will, for his own mother's sake, do a dying woman's last small behest?"

One of the most ragged and ruffianly of the men took off his cap and muttered, "I will, Citoyenne."

Continually such appeals were made, continually they were responded to by bloodthirsty savages.

"God will reward you. Never mind whether you believe in Him," she added, for the man was about to deny

the faith. “ He made natural affections, He will reward you when I cannot. A big, yellow-haired man stands yonder, bare-headed, in the midst. Go to him. Say his mother reminds him that he never disobeyed her ; bid him, as her last command, to quit the Place.”

The messenger departed.

“ Look out again, Jonquille.”

“ He is gone, my mother.”

“ My good son, my two good sons, who never disobeyed me. Ah, I have been a happy mother!”

Sylvain was relieved by another of Samson’s assistants, and came down from his place at a bound, cracking his finger joints.

“ Ah ! this is something like life, old friends. You, La Sarte, who tried to make a man of me, and you, Citizen Deputy, did I not say you would find work for me ? did I not ask you if you would not fancy looking out of the little window for a private view of the world ? There has been nothing so fine since that curmudgeon Samson was out of the way, and I had something higher than apprentice’s work,—somebody better than the canaille to dispose of. The girl with eyes the colour of the sky when the coarse day is over, and the fine night is come,—the girl who thought only of her mother, was a rare subject.”

Jonquille’s wan face flushed, his eyes flashed, he made a wrench at his bonds, and staggered nearer to Sylvain.

“ What ! holloa ! my old comrade, whom I got into disgrace, and who always blamed me for his scrapes.

You want to try an escape. Think not of it, my ass's colt; an escape has never been accomplished here."

Jonquille was quiet again.

"Jonquille, Jonquille, keep your vow," besought Olympe, in a thin and shrill voice.

"See here, Sylvain," said Jonquille, with calmness. "I promised this young girl something; for old acquaintance' sake permit me to fulfil my promise."

"Bravo! that is politely spoken; anything in reason, my pretty fellow."

"Only unbind my hands that I may tie up her eyes, and lead her a little bit on her way. Faith of Jonquille Sart! I will not attempt to get off; I am not a fool, old Sylvain."

"There, I unbind you; I am not unreasonable."

"It is not like our play, Jonquille," whispered Olympe, with chattering teeth. "Must you let me go? Think you, will the knife be cold?"

"My child, I, your brother, can go no farther; but another Brother, far kinder and stronger, will walk by your side. Though you do not see Him at this moment, you will see Him soon; and listen, Olympe! grandmother has begun to sing the evening hymn."

"Does grandmother sing it? I cannot hear, there is such a ringing in my ears. Ask the other Brother to walk very close to me, Jonquille, and remember you come after me; La Sarte, La Sarte, stop your singing. Will you let Jonquille come after me? I will be good and quick, not to keep him waiting."

"Ah! yes, my child, I prefer it so. I sang by his cradle, I would sing him to his last sleep."

The old woman sang on as martyrs sing at the stake, and poor young Olympe was gone to the great Elder Brother.

Jonquille was mounting the scaffold after her. "The girl with the mother forgave you, Sylvain?"

"Forgave me, yes; she wanted to take my hand when I let her mother go first."

"Then take mine, Sylvain; we have had our last quarrel. My mother is singing me to sleep, and you are preparing my pillow. I shall not rise from that pillow to get into any more grief. Thank you, Sylvain, you are sending me to her and young Olympe and our Lord. Good night, old Sylvain."

La Sarte was still singing when she walked up the steps. Before her eyes were bandaged she saw that the big, mournful, animal eyes, which looked into hers, were wet.

"Sylvain!"

"What is it, La Sarte?" he inquired, hoarsely.

"I have nothing to forgive you. You are giving me back to my Jonquille, perhaps he could not do without the old woman, even with the angels up yonder. But, Sylvain, I had two brave sons who always did my bidding. My man, let me be the last you guillotine. Hark! Sylvain, I hear the bells of Faye again; not the knell for the dead, but the chimes for the joyful birth at Bethlehem."

"It is hard," grumbled Sylvain, coming down slowly.

" Fresh work is the only thing that will prevent me getting disgusted with this. Ten thousand devils ! what will put all their eyes—like that girl's eyes—out of my head, except fresh eyes glaring on me ? But I have honour though I am a ravening beast. La Sarte, where is she now ? accusing me, condemning me an unnatural son, who murdered his mother. No, no, death ! it was the greatest service I could have rendered her. Long live death ! long live the guillotine ! "

CHAPTER XXII.

JACQUELINE'S TRIAL

MONSIEUR dead; Jonquille, La Sarte, and Olympe guillotined; and Jacqueline alone in the prison. It was more like Hades than ever. There were more hurrying, vanishing dim shapes, more wailing lost spirits. The games, and jests, and laughter, too, were becoming always more goblin-like. But death would not take Jacqueline. Women like her were suffered to live until their children were born. This was one of the ways in which was manifested that sad, fantastical reverence for nature, which was the only thing now revered by Frenchmen. They clung to the unknown and the untried; the single ray of hope they allowed themselves being centred in the children who were one day to be the people of France.

As Jacqueline lived for that other life, her mind began to dwell on it with a faint effort at escaping from herself and her fate. It saved her from death or madness.

Michel would get the child and rear it down at

Faye. He would be good to the child, and the child would be grateful. And amidst these thoughts there awoke in Jacqueline a faint yearning after Maître Michel. There sprang up in her a renewed trust in his unfailing generosity and gentleness, a perception that she had done him wrong. Her great wish was that her child might atone to him. She mused, "How wise a father Michel will make ! and how satisfied he will be with the child ! What a sullen, discontented girl I was in my remorse and misery, when even Babette hated me ! Perhaps there yet will be better days in the country. Monsieur Hubert may return to Faye. He may baptize and teach the child. I think I see him going up to the Tour on the summer evenings, and walking on the terrace when the nightingale sings, or playing at tric-trac with Michel, the child pulling flowers at their feet. But who will nurse the child ? Madame knows nothing of babies. Let me see, Babette—does she still live, I wonder ? Ah ! do they ever think of me who died so young ?"

But it was not to be as Jacqueline thought. On the last day of November, Citoyenne Jacqueline Faye, ci-devant Demoiselle de Faye, was called before the Tribunal.

"The cases have been changed," said one of the gendarmes to another on the way to the Conciergerie. "I read the week's allotment only yesterday, and this woman's name was not in it. Her case has been pressed forward by influence."

Jacqueline was not curious as to what influence

had pressed forward her trial. She looked blankly at the narrow, tortuous streets she had traversed with Dominique, with the Durands and Jonquille and Bertrand Pommeran, as if she had never seen them before, but had only heard them described. She had an instinctive sense that the scant gowns which the women wore in the depth of winter made her feel the cold more keenly. The open air blew roughly on her. Her face was waxen as the semi-transparent mask-like faces of the fine mesdames of the régime that was past. But she would not have been so pierced by the wind, although it was carrying along the fogs of the Seine, had she not stripped off her mantle at starting, and given it to a half-naked, gibbering old woman beside her.

She could not have told who her fellow-prisoners were, five minutes after she had entered the cart. The sole consciousness she retained was an intense weary longing, born of bodily illness, for rest, and this was relieved only by an idle wonder as to whether Jonquille and the others had taken the same turns in the tumbril in the same period of time, whether they had been landed at the very spot where she was told to alight, and led into a similar cell of the Conciergerie. Like the foolish rhyme, or quaint tune, or little incident that flickers before the mind, or flutters on the tongue, in crises of men's histories, strangely shutting out, or grotesquely chequering, momentous considerations, so this idle, harping curiosity regarding what had been the movements of her mother, Jonquille, and Olympe affected

Jacqueline. A gaoler's wife, after having heard the requests of the other woman, who still had strength and sobriety left to make requests, turned to Jacqueline, and interpreting the parched lips and beseeching eyes as entreating something, said, "What will you, Citoyenne?"

Jacqueline answered, "Your clemency. Had you a young man, an old woman, and a young girl in your care this month?" She had a perception that she was trying the woman's patience, but she could not resist doing it.

"Pshaw! how can I remember among so many?" grumbled the woman. "I have had lots of old men and young women in my keeping this week. But what signifies? they all went one road. Now that I think of it," continued the woman, more softly, "I did have the three, an old man, and two young women, and one or other of them slept soundly in the bed to which I shall introduce you. There," she muttered to herself, "she will rest more easily, the miserable creature. She has the mania; many come here with the mania, but not many, thank the saints! so miserable as she is. A girl in that state, and her man, without doubt, guillotined already! Suppose my man see her, he will be for giving up the trade; and nothing pays like it now, except—— But I should not like that, unless for the vengeance; the dreams at night would be awful. Now here one has only to crib the family up, like so many mice in a trap, and no fear of the dreams."

Jacqueline's whole life lately had been so like a waking dream, had been so much of an insensibility and a partial delirium, that she lay with her eyes half open. A phantasmagoria, in which La Sarte, Jonquille, and young Olympe figured principally, passed before her, and kept her as still as if she slept a dreamless sleep. Once or twice she raised herself on her elbow, and startled some of the poor creatures huddled together around her under the dim night-lamp. They were discussing the chances, terribly few, of to-morrow, breathing half-forgotten forms of prayer, making vows, executing testamentary dispositions of their affairs, and bequeathing tokens, in the desperate hope of their reaching their relatives; while some beguiled the weary hours by playing at cards. The watchers and the gamblers were almost frightened out of their wits by a white, thin face looking out upon them, and a weak voice asking them the irrelevant questions, "What ails you? What are you doing here?"

As Jacqueline passed before the Tribunal, there was no mistaking her unconscious grace and inalienable delicacy. The lily looks still the lily, though its stem be broken and its leaves withered. Alas for the poor little Narcisse! a thousand times more like a narcisse dying in the soil and darkness of the city than when the Marquis de Lussac gave her the nickname on her summer flight from Faye. But Jacqueline woke up strangely, suddenly, grasped the bar before her to steady her, and gazed rationally, not at the judges, but at a big man in green riding coat and long boots. It was her hus-

band, Maître Michel, whom she had not seen thus face to face since she parted from him in the Durands' entresol on the evening of his arrival in Paris, when she addressed him in self-defence, "I did well to come to Paris, Michel."

Michel was grey, as his brother Jonquille had described him, so grey that the silvered locks gathered in his queue were now the most notable thing about him, more notable even than his stately height and breadth. To-day another peculiarity in Michel Sart manifested itself,—one which clung to him all his life afterwards, and showed itself whenever he was deeply moved. The strong lines about his mouth quivered in their muscles without losing their firm, sagacious character, as a man's hand will shake when it holds forth to his dearest friend the medicine which will either cure or kill.

"Citoyenne Jacqueline Faye, a seditious aristocrate, and an assertor of royalty before the Convention," read the public accuser.

"Pardon me, Citizen," interrupted the pleader, with decision. "I object; there is an error in the count. The prisoner is the wife of Citizen Sart, aubergiste of the hamlet of Faye, an honest man and a republican."

Maximilien Robespierre was not on the tribune, so the name of Sart recalled no compromising antecedents. But the judges and the audience stared incredulously at the refined, half-crazed face of Jacqueline.

"The alleged objection is a farce," overruled an impatient juryman, "you are aristocrat, Citoyenne?"

"Yes, Messieurs my Judges," answered Jacqueline,

and began to wander in her mind again, while Michel looked at her imploringly.

“ Citizen Judges, if you please, do you hear ?”

“ We hear,” responded the judges.

“ Down with the aristocrats !” followed, with a sullen roar.

“ Proceed with the accusation.”

“ Again no, Citizen President,” persisted the pleader, with unwonted confidence. “ Citoyenne Jacqueline Sart is grosse ; the republic does not destroy its unborn subjects. Citizen Sart demands life for his child.”

“ The ruse has been tried before,” said one of the judges, harshly. “ Say, then, Citoyenne Sart, will you swear to your condition ?”

Poor womanhood, thus outraged, thrilled through its stupor, and made its own convincing protest : Jacqueline crimsoned to the brow, and hid her face in her hands.

There was a doubtful murmur : it meant commiseration, and a consultation among the judges.

The President rose and announced the judgment. “ Citoyenne Jacqueline Sart, believed to be the wife of Citizen Sart, certificate having been offered to prove it, the Tribunal, in its clemency, admits your plea, and delivers you up to your husband, unless you should be again denounced to the Committee of Safety. Go, Citoyenne. Bring forward the next prisoner.” Either for life or death, the Tribunal did its work speedily.

“ Where do you take me ?” asked Jacqueline, as they drew her through the crowd, that volatile crowd which

made way for her, sheltered her, cried and laughed over her as their daughter, their sister—the one in a thousand who left the bar of the Tribunal for life and liberty. “This is not the way Jonquille went. No, I cannot go out into the streets,” she concluded, offering a feeble resistance.

“Hush, my wife, you are saved ! come, only a little farther ; come, Jacqueline ! ”

The mob would have killed her with kindness. They would have carried her shoulder high, they would have danced the carmagnole round her. Their love was to be feared, next to their wrath. But Maître Michel had a fiacre at a hundred yards distance, and, leaning out of it, scolding the little boys of the Paris streets, was an old familiar face,—a broad, fresh, piquant face, though by comparison thin and worn since its first appearance on the stage of Faye. It was Babette. She had been brought up from the province by Maître Michel on the bare hope of this contingency. “You have won her, Maître Michel,” she exclaimed. “All the saints in heaven be praised ! St. Barbe, for one, shall have the biggest candle in La Maille. Oh, come, come to your old Babette, who will not see you hurt. Don’t you remember how she was your playfellow, your servant, your adorer ? Oh, my poor little old Made-moiselle, come to the arms of your Baba, and she will hold you, and cherish you, and rock you back to life and him.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

A LONG REST FOR JACQUELINE WHILE THE STORM BLOWS
ON IN FRANCE.

66



OU must not take her to Faye, Maître Michel ; she would die on the road. You must carry her aside, my son, and lay her down where she will come back to you by degrees at her child's voice and touch, and look up, and wish to rise and see that the days of her mourning are ended."

Michel, tender as a mother, patient as a father, complied. It was hard to go home alone to the auberge at Faye, and to leave Jacqueline once more to the guardianship of others, especially in such days as these. But Michel was always strong for duty.

There was a little town near Paris, a royal town with royal recollections. It stood in a great forest, which in spring was hung over with green tracery, but was leafless now, with broad tracks of mire intersecting its vistas of grand old trunks.

Here Michel found a small house in an orchard, kept by an old couple who had made up their minds to shut their doors and their ears, and rest tranquil while

the fierce storm rattled over France. Having no children exposed to its pitiless violence, they were able, like many another superannuated couple, to fulfil their intention. The old pair played at games—My Aunt's Garden, and the Genteel Chevalier—in bed every morning. When they had risen and were dressed they saluted each other, the gentleman going away to his gardening, and the lady to her delicate cookery, her light household work, or her tatting. In the evening they had their games again till bedtime. If any one spoke to them about the wild work without, Monsieur would say, “Pardon me, I am a little deaf. Ah! deafness is a sore trial, it quite lays a man in the drawer, in the drawer.” And Madame would explain, “Me, I am a stupid old woman; politics were not the fashion when I was young. Tell me, how goes the carpet work, or the joinery?”

This worthy couple were rather poor; so, for a consideration, they admitted Jacqueline and Babette into the stronghold of their serenity and imperturbability, asking no questions and being entirely guiltless of allusions.

In the little house in the orchard, Jacqueline, before she was eighteen, was laid down to die or to wear slowly back to life. She was restless and uneasy for many days, and could not be convinced that she was out of prison, though she missed the long corridors, the varied crowd, the hollow laughter or the dull lamentation of the shades in Pluto's domains. Towards evening she would make confused calculations on her fingers; and she was

always thinking the day was a Décadie, just as working men and women imagine every rest-day a Sunday. But after a season she got accustomed to the new scene. Her child was born a living child, she knew ; and beyond that she cared for scarce anything. She lay days and weeks in the lassitude of the burden and anguish that were gone, hovering on the brink of the grave. Spring was in the wonderful forest again, and the cushions of winter—the emerald moss—were beginning to fade before a gayer embroidery, and still she lay, her spirit neither stirring, nor questioning, nor reasoning. Her host and hostess whispered about her as the poor young invalid, and solemnly shook their heads. Babette all the time waited on her mistress, as a mother waits on her child. Had she for one hour forgotten her charge, Maitre Michel would have had no sick young wife to dream of by day and by night, to pray for morning and evening, to travel backwards and forwards to see. But Babette did not fail ; a rare nobleness and fidelity began to show themselves in the tale told by the low-browed, full-lipped, ruddy-brown peasant face.

The first time Michel Sart came up from Faye to visit his wife, he encountered an old acquaintance at one of the Paris barriers. The man was so changed and shrunk, his skin so blackened, and his nightcap so bleached and discoloured by his exposure for nights in doorways and under arches, that Michel had difficulty at first in recognising him as Sylvain.

Michel was not well informed as to the butcher's last

trade, but thus altered, he looked on him with distrust, and tried to free himself from his company. But in vain. Sylvain, smoking his pipe, accompanied Michel till the two were on one of the comparatively deserted avenue roads, the butcher making short observations as they went. Suddenly he dashed the pipe from his mouth. "I can do without the cloud for a moment ; though I want it to fill my eyes and chase away the spectres,—yet, my faith ! it only raises them sometimes. Michel, knock me on the head ; I played the executioner to La Sarte, and Jonquille, the little girl they had with them, and the other girl before, as well as to a host of others."

Michel looked as though he could have complied with the request ; his grey eyes flashed, and his deep chest heaved. "Monster, do you dog me to tell me this ? Leave off following me, else I shall not be able to keep myself from killing you."

Sylvain stood still, defenceless. "My brave man, kill me for mercy's sake," he said.

The tone was strange to Michel. He looked again into the haggard face. The satyr-like eyes were more unfathomably mournful than he had ever seen human eyes. "Man, you have wronged me terribly, but as I hope to be forgiven, I leave you to God."

Sylvain shrank, then came back grovelling to Michel's feet, groaning, "Do not look at me with their eyes, Michel. There is no need, I see them always ; they shine on me every night from the sky in tens of thousands. No peace for me save in the clouds, and these,

whether of the pipe or of the brandy fumes, only last for a moment. I thought you would have given me peace, Michel, because you are La Sarte's son. But there is one mode left yet, not forbidden. But what if the eyes shine beyond it? My God! I cannot help it, I have had enough of them here, I will try them there," and Sylvain turned and sped back to the city, walking with uncertain, irregular steps.

Michel Sart never saw nor heard of Sylvain again, neither did Faye, save in dark whispers. His fate was unknown, even in the world of Paris. He was one of the waifs of the Revolution, with regard to whom no investigation was instituted when they disappeared from their vile haunts.

But on the same night that Michel Sart parted from Sylvain, a strange incident occurred in the gathering of the usual day's harvest. Thirty-three victims had been told off; but when the executioners counted their trophies, thirty-four heads were returned. A stranger had been jostled amongst the prisoners, and had suffered with them. Bah! Accidents would happen; it was a wonder one had not happened sooner. What was a single life? it was not worth mentioning.

Still the guillotine drove a brisk trade through the early spring, and into the hot summer again. The spectacle had grown stale and the spectators indifferent. The machine was carried out and set up in one or other of the faubourgs, to collect new and more interested audiences. What a long work of death for the gay, philosophic city, with its belt of boulevards, its

lilies again in the windows, and its neglected plumes of lilac once more trailing over the gateways of the great family hotels, now the property of the Nation !

There was yet another dance of death, or what was as mournful, a dance of the fatuousness of human reason. Apostate priests in a crowd came forward and renounced the Christian creed. "There shall be one God only—the people," was the watchword. It was long ago now since an ass in a priest's vestments, with a mitre on its head, and the Mass-book, or perhaps the Bible, dragging at its tail, paraded the streets of Lyons. All France, following the example, trampled out the last embers of whatever it had held holy, burned the church furniture in huge bonfires, and perverted to basest uses chalice, patine, cross, and censer. Even the tombs of St. Denis were rifled. It would have been a reflection on human reason to have left the dead, with raised hands in effigy pointed meekly to heaven.

A poor, vain woman, carried shoulder high, was borne into the Hall of the Nation, a red cap on her head, a blue cloak around her, oak garlands for her symbol, and a pike in her right hand. She was attended by young women in white and tricolour. The Members hailed her as Goddess of Reason, and saluted her as their divinity. They joined in the procession to Notre Dame, and, causing her to take her seat on the high altar, they chanted to her and offered her worship.

It is a relief to turn from these orgies to the faith of simple women. The nuns of Compiègne, in their

long white robes and veils, sang their *Te Deum Laudamus* in the cart, and began their *Veni Creator* below the scaffold. The Superior mounted last, and closed the lofty hymn.

The ringing of forges was the only wholesome music in the country; news from the army the only cheerful tidings. Yet old Moreau was guillotined on the very day his son the general had won the Republic a great battle. It was but another accident among the many.

As the season advanced there were open theatres, and dancing-halls, and Fraternity banquets. The streets of Paris formed one great eating-room, or succession of eating-rooms. Every man had his table placed at his door, and, with his family, ate his supper there. There was the friendly clinking of glasses on every side; but sometimes the older people would start, and shiver a little, when, as the spring sunset flushed the long row of tables, the children would dabble their fingers in the spilt wine, and laughingly call it "blood." There was little gaiety in the fraternal banquets, and little splendour in the fraternal clothing, when every man put on a shag jacket and a red nightcap, and every woman went shivering in her Greek costume, and dared not adapt any material more pretentious than cotton or muslin.

For the prison meals, they had dwindled down to the one coarse mess, and the whole scene was hideous, loathsome. The égorgeurs, who had slaughtered the prisoners' friends, and been paid for the slaughter, were placed over the prisoners. Prison spies listened to every

word of the hysterical jests and the doleful murmurs. No man trusted his brother. All that was left for bravado to do was to rouge the cheek to conceal its whiteness on the scaffold.

Lucille Desmoulins thought the world was gone altogether wrong, and her kind heart was ready to break for the misery she witnessed. She could endure it no longer, and accordingly bade her old licentious husband, the Stammerer, wade into the torrent, and try to stem it. He had enough manhood in him to believe in her and to obey her. He tried St. Christopher's feat. And so the "leaves" of the old Cordeliers, to the breathless wonder and mystification of France, and the indignation of Robespierre and his followers, fluttered abroad like birds bright pinioned, when contrasted with the ravens which had preceded them. Along with lessons culled from Tacitus and the old Romans, were hopeful proposals for a Committee of Mercy. A new whirlwind was raised in the Convention, under which the old Cordeliers went down, and Camille Desmoulins and Danton were arrested overnight. Lucille was another Belvidera, who did not save Venice, and who lost her Jaffier. But her time for deliverance was coming fast.

Before the tribunal which their own hands had reared, and for the rearing of which Danton craved pardon of God and man, these men were tried by their fellow-revolutionists, and defended themselves with such bursts of French vanity and blasphemy as might have been looked for.

Danton pleaded powerfully against his accusers. All

in vain. A new charge was raised in the middle of the trial, and by this stratagem the Cordeliers were sentenced. The cart rolled off with these lions at bay, who rose to some lion-like generosity, ere it was too late. Camille Desmoulins refused to die, but was encouraged by Danton, and met his fate at last with a lock of Lucille's hair in his hand, and Lucille's name on his lips.

Danton, too, had a wife, lately wedded, in whose company he had spent some quiet days and weeks, during the last fearful year, and whom he mentioned with wistful fondness before he sternly rebuked himself with the memorable words, "No weakness, Danton," and turned and said to Samson, "Thou wilt show my head to the people; it is worth showing."

Another victim in the genial April was Madame Elizabeth, styling herself bravely on the day of her trial, "Elizabeth of France, sister of Louis XVI., aunt of Louis XVII., your King." She was one of the gentlest and humblest of women, who, close to the gorgeous glitter of a throne, had, up till her thirtieth year, led a life of pure, simple family affection. She had sighed for the privacy and pious services of the cloister, and had only remained in the world because her king and brother willed it. This Elizabeth of France, on whom the evil breath of court scandal, so lightly raised, had never blown, was in her turn summoned by the voice of the mob to die. She died saint-like, as she had lived. She halved her neckerchief with a poor woman next her in the tumbril; kissed the Marquise, who ac-

accompanied her ; and begged, in her piteous womanliness, that the executioner who bared her neck would, in his mother's name, cover her.

The loved head of Lucille Desmoulins also lay low in one of the nameless heaps which filled the great pits of the dead. And then Thérèse, the wife of Tallien, thrown into prison, and in mortal terror of her life, tried what poor Lucille had suggested when neither her prosperity nor her existence was threatened. Thérèse urged on Tallien by every means of communication in her power to denounce Robespierre, and save her. "Save me ; save thyself. Are ye not all doomed ?" she pled cunningly in her desperation ; and Tallien shuddered and mightily bestirred himself.

There were mutterings in the Convention which startled Robespierre. On July 27th Tallien accused Robespierre of tyranny, of aiming at a dictatorship and a triumvirate. The Convention, like Thérèse Tallien, their lives hanging in the balance, supported the charge : Robespierre and his friends were arrested.

There were riding and running in the dusty summer streets ; signs of hope were made to the poor prisoners in the many prisons from skylights and roofs of houses —signs which they could not understand, and dared not believe or trust.

The chiefs, Robespierre, Couthon, young St. Just, Henriot, when they found everything was lost, sought the universal refuge of self-destruction. But the hands which had shed seas of blood were paralyzed when they attempted to let out their own lives. At four of the after-

noon, through the streets, more crowded than ever, passed the dreariest and most ghastly tumbril load which was ever driven to the guillotine. The cart was full of maimed, half dead, writhing, cursing men. Robespierre, his jaw, which his own trembling hand had shot away, now bound up with linen, scarcely gave token of life, till a woman sprang up on the cart, and woke him with the blasting denunciation, "The death of thee gladdens my heart, intoxicates me with joy. Villain ! go down to hell with the curses of all wives and mothers !" The last blow of the axe was nothing to what went before it.

Then there broke forth a jubilant shout of relief and joy through France ; the prisoners breathed, the free exulted. The Terror was at an end.

Soon Parisian gaiety shone out brilliant as ever, and most adored among Parisian belles walked Thérèse Tallien, with her languishing Spanish eyes, unhesitatingly accepting a nation's gratitude. Lucille Desmoulins lay buried and forgotten in the twin heap to that which held her husband. Here was the world's justice, of a piece with the world's mourning. Women wore tiny gold guillotines as they had worn miniature models of the Bastille, and adopted red shawls à propos of Charlotte Corday's red shirt. Men had their hair plaited and turned up in the mode à la victime. There were Bals à la Victime, the right of admission to which was the production of a proof of having lost a near blood relation—a sister, brother, husband, father, or mother—by the knife ; and Madame Pommeran found young Olympe's death of some use to her,

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE TAIL OF THE TERROR IN THE PROVINCES—BABETTE'S FAITH—FÉLICITÉ POMMERAN AND HER OFFICER—FÉLICITÉ AN OLD WOMAN—BON SOIR.

“**M**ONSIEUR is dead, saidst thou, before he could be condemned? Ah! I am sure he did his best not to die and leave his fellow-prisoners in the lurch. And he died with fortitude and resignation, professing the faith of a Christian? All that needs no telling, for Monsieur was one of the first of gentlemen when there were gentlemen; and one is forced into the realities, and can speculate no longer, when such facts meet the philosopher on all sides. Dead! Madame would have mourned for him in grand mode à l'Andromaque. Diane Ligny can only remember what a fine man he was the first day she set eyes on him, and how he always paid court to Madame, like a prince as he was.”

A noble old woman in a peasant's dress said this to Michel Sart when he broke the news of Monsieur's death to her in the auberge at Faye. She sat preoccupied for a time, and then got up, came to him, and put her hand on his shoulder. “My son,” she said, “you have suffered. You were one of the people. You could allow

yourself to suffer, though you combated the suffering like a brave man. There was another old woman besides Diane Ligny. She was one of Heaven's quality, and she is gone to her own place, and has taken her boy along with her, for he might not have walked with safe feet here without her. Be comforted. I forgot you for a moment, because I am old, and am not a grand dame who only forgets herself at such seasons ; but Jacqueline will not forget you. She is young and good ; she will come back and make it up to you, and there will be new life and a new generation at Faye."

Madame knew much ; she knew that all the village was mourning for La Sarte and Jonquille ; she knew that Monsieur had died, and that Jacqueline had been with her father to the end, and that the poor girl was at liberty and safe now, though too sick and weary to return home. But how great the danger to her daughter, and how narrow her escape, Madame never knew in this world.

"To whom, then, belongs the Tour de Faye, Maitre Michel ? Is it confiscated ?" asked its old mistress, in some anxiety.

"Oh no ; it is Jacqueline's. I hold it for her," answered Michel, promptly ; but he did not tell that he had bought the estate months previously. Madame was a sharp woman, and probably penetrated the truth.

"Ah ! there it is ; a new race, a new régime. It is time Diane Ligny were gone, with the rest of the old things."

"Do not say so !" entreated Maitre Michel ; "you

will go up to the Tour and dwell there with Jacqueline, when, by God's blessing, she returns to us. The mother of Jacqueline is for ever at home in Jacqueline's house; is it not so?"

"Yes, as far as you are concerned, my son; but I will not go up. I am too old for any more changes. I could not die at first, because I was not puddle blood, to die in the body the moment adversity came near me. Now my family springs from a new root, prospers afresh, and I rejoice at it. But I am old, and God is good; He will let me die now, and go to my fathers, with whom only I am fit to associate, except in masquerade."

And just as though Madame had lived by force of will to play a part, she began to break up as soon as she relinquished her rôle. Her infirmities increased rapidly, but they were borne with unflinching endurance and a kind of suave dignity which exercised the most wonderful fascination over those around her. Some weeks before Jacqueline could put her feet on the turf, all that was mortal of Madame was buried by night, under the direction of Maître Michel and the farming man from Croix, in the vault of the Barons of Faye, below the little church among the willows, the ban of the Convention still lying on the open rites of religion.

Michel carried the tidings of Madame's peaceful death to Jacqueline, now so far recovered that she could drop quiet tears for the mother who had passed away at the end of the troubles, like the sheaf of corn fully ripe and craving its garner, being unfitted any longer to stand even the favourable breezes of earthly fortune.

Jacqueline crept closer to Michel as she wept, and hid herself in his arms. "Where would Madame have been without you, Michel? You have been a true son, a true son of our house." Jacqueline repeated the words as if she had a troubled, humbled consciousness that other relations in which they had been concerned had not been so truly fulfilled. But no word of Michel's ever suggested to her such a reproach. Jacqueline's long stupor of pride, prejudice, and consuming remorse was ended. She dried her eyes, rose, and brought her child, in which she felt a young mother's exceeding pride and delight, and, putting it in Michel's arms, said timidly, "Jonquille foretold that when I put the boy in your arms it would make up to you for all, Michel,—does it not do so?"

"There is nothing to make up, my wife; I do not presume to ask God to make up for the afflictions which He has sent to me. And you have nothing to make up but health and strength, heart and cheer, my lily; only it cannot be done in a day," answered the great, grey man, touching his child with tenderness, and looking with yet more tender reverence on his wife.

Jacqueline shook her head: "I am a poor, broken down, withered creature, not worth the having, Michel. But if God spare the child, he will bloom beside you, and make you proud and glad for his sake. I thought of it in the prison."

Michel, thinking to please her, asked what their son should be called, and said that he should like him to bear the name of Gabriel, adding that the boy might live

to see men's honours restored, and to assume the arms and bearings of the De FAYES.

"No," said she, "Gabriel is a dear name, and it is written on my heart. If I ever have another boy, it shall be given to him; but as for this one, he shall be quite a Sart. Michel—Marie—Jonquille, our mother's name between those of her two sons, borne by her grandson. Will it not be well, Michel?"

He softly kissed her, and said all was well; and then she sat down beside him, and began to prattle to him, in something like a faint echo of his Demoiselle's old talk of the forest, and the storms, and the Great Hunter, whose spectral feats reminded her of those of the Georrière of FAYE.

Michel set out for the Tour to make preparations for removing the young Madame, Babette, and the puppet, as Babette without ceremony styled the son and heir, to the old ancestral home.

One day in the end of June Jacqueline was sitting out in a glade of the forest, idly pulling handfuls of wild ranunculuses and anemones, and strewing them about the happy six months' child in her lap. Babette sat with her knees drawn up, spelling out passages in a copy of the *Moniteur* extended before her. Babette assiduously practised her scholarship in journal-reading, but she very rarely communicated the information thence derived to Jacqueline, who once had fancied she would not like to live among the shaddocks and pine apples of a West Indian island, like Virginia with her Paul, because she would be deprived of the *Mercure de Paris*.

Jacqueline was not yet so far recovered as to desire news, and in general shrank when the terrible troubles, in which she had borne a part, were referred to in her presence. She knew that the power of evil was broken in France, and said, "We will thank God for it with all our poor women's hearts, Babette; we will keep a day in its remembrance during every year of our lives. We will pray now that poor creatures going out of the prisons will find dear old friends, and unconscious little cherished ones, to pour oil and wine into their wounded spirits, and bind them up, and win them back again to life and hope."

But now Babette, clutching the paper, pushed it before Jacqueline, and pointed with a broad, brown finger to a particular paragraph in a long column headed "Continuance of the Terror in the Provinces." The paragraph ran:—"At La Maille, in the department of the Mousse the executions have not yet ceased. A man of consideration, Citizen Michel Sart, purchaser of the estate of Faye, and brother of the late deputy from the Mousse, Jonquille Sart, who was guillotined at Paris during the winter, was arrested in attempting to announce the changes in the Convention, and to prevent further bloodshed. It is too probable he has by this time formed another victim."

"Look at it well, Mademoiselle. It is Maître Michel, your protector, the father of your child," cried Babette, her eyes flashing.

"Oh, Michel, Michel, what can I do?" sobbed Jacqueline, startled, and shaken, and smitten with new anguish

and dismay. "Oh, Michel, why did you not suffer me to die with the rest?"

"Not a word of that," said Babette, fiercely, stamping her foot. "Not a word of dying, Mademoiselle, or I shall think you altogether unworthy of him. He never thought of dying ; neither when the ball was in his own hands, nor when he could but stand aside and look on at the game, and wait for the distant chance of a throw. A dog can die, Mademoiselle. And do not swoon now. There will be space and leisure for swooning when it is all over. Think how Michel loved you, how he served you, asking—bah ! taking no recompence ; content to be your disregarded, unrepaid benefactor and servant. Know you I was once a devil,—I told him where he would find honour and devotion nearer to his own, after I had bidden him believe that you were false to him, that you had met your cousin in Paris, and that Michel Sart's kindness and his wife's duty were alike forgotten."

"He could not, he dared not believe it of me," cried Jacqueline, indignantly, in her weakness.

"No, Mademoiselle, he could not ; but because he was so good, not because you had not done anything to try his faith. It is not every man who will hold to his own warm heart an icicle, continually pining and melting away in tears for others. As to daring, he might have dared. Was he not brave when he stood asking the life of his mother and his brother ; claiming his wife from the Tribunal ? Is he not brave when at last he dies, a grey-headed martyr in his prime, for the ungrateful people of La Maille ?"

Jacqueline was crawling to her servant's feet. "Oh, Babette, it is true. I speak no more of myself or of death. I am not good enough to die. I have been a selfish, inconsiderate, cruel girl; but, Babette, you who knew me when I was a child, help to keep me from being a base, ungrateful wretch. God will not let us be too late. Get up and go with me to tell him, to tell everybody what he has been. If I perish, some mother will take my child."

The two women set out for La Maille. They travelled as untutored and delicate women have sometimes travelled in extremity;—by diligences still running, by post-chaises, on dead priests' mules, on cart-horses, and sometimes they walked on foot, one or other carrying the child, along tangled cross-roads, where there was not even a bridle path. Occasionally they would beg, to be furthered on their journey, for money and charity. They met many wanderers, and some skulking villains who had been Terrorists, but were now in terror of their own lives. They travelled late at night, and early in the morning, and throughout the sultry noon, scarcely stopping for food or sleep. No one harmed the two women. The most helpless may be suffered to go unharmed; and the one protected the other. Babette protected Jacqueline by her peasant hardihood and strength; Jacqueline protected Babette by her gentleness and weakness.

At last the two reached the familiar environs of La Maille. Nearly two years before, Jacqueline had driven with Maître Michel in the early August morning

along that road, and in her crumpled white gown and La Sarte's cloak had gone before the mayor to be wed. There were the old baronial houses with their peaked roofs, their coats of arms mutilated and defaced. The châteaux in the vicinity had their windows broken and the smoke of burning upon them; the thickets of fresh blossoming roses in the gardens were lying in mingled ruin and renewal under the rich purple of the evening sky.

The poor travellers had alighted from their last conveyance, and dismissed it, not to run the risk of being detained at the gate.

They were entering the town on foot as expeditiously and inoffensively as possible. Suddenly, the sound of bells ringing and drums beating was borne on the peaceful air. The two women halted and held each other, heart-broken at their journey's end. Was it the tocsin, the signal of rage and alarm, the note of Maître Michel's execution?

"Courage, my little Mademoiselle," cried Babette, throwing herself down frantically on the road, and clasping her mistress's knees to sustain her and the child. "These are joy-peals, and look you, yonder is the reflection of fireworks beginning to shine in the sky; it will be seen as far as Faye. Whatever commotion may be in the wind, La Maille is not so far left to itself as to rejoice over the sacrifice of Maître Michel. Listen, my mistress; I believe he is delivered. The people know, as well as you and I, the true and noble man he is. I doubt not they are

crowding round him to do him honour, rejoicing that he has triumphed: shall you and I and his child alone be absent?"

Babette was right; the reaction had set in at La Maille. Michel Sart had lain in prison, as so many of his own friends had done, the doom of death lowering over him, until the clouds had burst asunder, and the sun had shone through. The people of La Maille, like the people elsewhere, had at last learned that there was no perennial spring of happiness in wanton, licentious destruction. The mass had accepted the new light. Leavened with fresh, irresistible power, they had risen against the tyrants there also, and demanded a change of system,—the putting down of the executioners and the executions, the freeing of the arrested,—justice and mercy.

Maitre Michel had not only been freed, but was now regarded in La Maille as the man who had struck the first blow at the destroyer, and had all but perished in the deed. He was the hero of the hour. The French, of all nations, can least do without a hero. Though Michel Sart was elected to the post of hero of La Maille, much to his own astonishment, he was a worthy one, and that is saying more for him than can be said for many popular heroes, be they heroes for a night, or for an age.

Michel was standing on the steps of the mairie with the mayor, the same who had married him to Jacqueline, and who was now making clumsy gestures of immense respect and admiration towards his illustrious

friend. A great throng of huzzaing, dancing, and singing men, women, and children filled the place, in the centre of which crackled a bonfire of old barrels and brushwood.

Michel was come out to receive an ovation, and to answer an address, though he was not an orator like poor Jonquille. The people, too, would have the opportunity of looking on his strong frame, his lined face, and his grey head. The wildest, not many days ago clamouring for blood, were now melted by another impulse, and pressed up to him to kiss his hands.

The homage was not wholly palatable to Maitre Michel. Possibly enough, his mind would all the time wander dreamily and yearningly to the old woman who had been his first teacher, to the young brother who might have been his mouthpiece to-day, and to the sick young wife from whom he had been twice so nearly torn. His steady head grew dizzy in thinking of these things in his thankfulness. But he was a good man, to whom sympathy, and the atoning for past offences, were precious. Thus he stood there manfully, and patiently accepted the public acknowledgment, answering it to the best of his ability: "You have too much regard for me, my friends. It is true, I did my best to save some of you, and the great thing is that I succeeded. Let us all exult that a man may in future do his duty without the risk of destruction, and for the rest, say no more about it."

In the midst of the shrill huzzaing which followed the speech, a young, pretty girl, the prettiest in La Maille,

and dressed in white for the occasion, advanced towards Michel, and wanted, as the grand climax of the demonstration, to crown him with the oak wreath.

But Michel prevented her by quickly and gently taking the wreath from her hand and placing it on the girl's head instead. "It will suit you better than me, Citoyenne," he said, and as he spoke he touched his grey hair. "I wear my crown already. See the garland the Revolution has given me."

The men tapped each other on the back approvingly, the women sobbed and hugged their children closer to them, and then, after a moment, held them up to see the good citizen whom the Revolution had made like a father to them all, while he was yet in his prime.

But the affair of the crown was not the climax. Two soiled, wayworn women, the one very young and fair, the other with a child in her arms, pushed their way through the market-place. The crowd opened up before them as by magic, though the only magic was that of the stout, comely peasant woman telling all before her, "It is his wife; it is the old Demoiselle de Faye. Do you comprehend? She thought to see him under the guillotine, and now that he is on the people's shoulders, do you not believe she is a world prouder of him than any of you can be? Place for the wife, the child, and the servant of Maitre Michel!"

Michel did not see the two women till the last moment; the confusion they created concealed them from him. They were lifted up the steps, and Jacqueline sought to kneel and clasp his hand, now freed from all

other claimants, and press it to her lips. It was she who spoke to the crowd ;—“ He sheltered me and mine ; he saved me in extremity, my dear, brave husband. If you do him homage, how much more should I, before you all, proclaim to him my love, duty, and undying devotion ?”

The crowd heard the testimony in a breathless silence of surprise, succeeded by a louder and louder tumult,—the renewed sobbing of the women, the embracing of the men, mixed with clapping of hands, and cries of “ Live the Citizen and the Citoyenne Sart ! Live Maître Michel and his wife !” and, in spite of the laws they had framed and gloried in, “ Live the new Sieur and Dame de Faye !”

It was at once strangely sweet and exquisitely painful to Maître Michel to be thus unexpectedly hailed by the people and acknowledged by Jacqueline. But for the first few minutes he did nothing save scold her and Babette. “ You are killed, I know it, Jacqueline. Were you mad, Babette ? Jacqueline, what are you about ? Am I barbarian or Turk that my wife should thus prostrate herself to me ?”

Jacqueline was a little frightened at the rough voice, never rough to her before—at once frightened and fascinated. “ My Michel ! I could not help it. I thought I should never see you again to tell you how true a wife I was going to be.”

The sweetness was flowing like a great tide over the subtle pain. Michel’s face glowed as it had done when he walked with Jacqueline on another summer evening

from the hamlet to the Tour, and spoke of dying for his Demoiselle. But now there was a man's triumph and joy in the flushing cheek and flashing eye, as well as the glow of the old-world chivalry and loyalty which used to reign there. Michel could have persuaded himself that he heard the nightingale in the bocage at Faye through all the roar.

But it was only Jacqueline's voice, now no longer a scared voice, for he had smiled down on her, hanging on his arm, and telling him in her sweet tones, "I was so young, Michel, and I had newly dreamt a foolish dream. But I do know you at last, my husband, and need not to grow any older or wiser to understand what you are, since you have brought me out of the chambers of the dead, restored me to life and earth again. I do not ask you to have still patience with me, Michel, because you loved me when I was silly and proud, foolish and vexatious."

France had progressed, or retrograded, into a Directory. The poor little Dauphin under the care of Simon, the shoemaker, had been released from his misery, and again experienced the touch of kindness. The sad young girl, his sister, had been exchanged for General Lafayette, and was gone to her mother's gay Vienna to grow up to womanhood, marry, and return among the rulers of France, but never to laugh again—the young girl's simple trick of laughter being lost for ever.

Down at Faye the sea of blood had long ebbed. Those who had perished in it were not forgotten, but

had risen above the earthly horizon, and were shining like stars in the heavenly firmament. Faye itself, and the Tour, were grey and quiet again as old grey lichens. Michel Sart and his wife Jacqueline, with their children about their knees, dwelt full of peace, bounty, and brightness. They had lived to appreciate the "clear shining after rain." The roses and hawthorn blossomed on the terrace, and the acacias and privets in the Ravine of Plums. There were red cherries in the little orchards, and blue grapes on the hamlet trellises, and round the gallery of the auberge, now kept by Babette, and only occasionally visited by Michel and Jacqueline, to be looked at with half pensive, half glad eyes.

Everything was changed, and the new régime established. The aristocrats, coming out of their hiding-places, found another world. The farmers-general who had not been "suspects," the financiers, the lawyers, the men of intelligence, worthy and unworthy, the risen and rising men like Michel Sart, ruled at home and abroad, and continued to rule and hold their own. Their one great aim was to prevent the building up again of the Babel towers of the old quality. Only a few old relics of the past were left, to talk proudly of the glories of bygone days, and hope vainly for their restoration.

At the Tour, too, all was changed, but nothing was forgotten. Among the new furniture,—the chintz, muslin, maple, and sandal wood,—in the suite of rooms held by husband and wife in common, there was many a vestige of another generation, another mode of life.

Here a cabinet without a door, there a battered screen, or a riveted Sèvres dish, recovered from the wreck. True, the picture of Madame as the nymph with the alabaster bow and the alabaster skin was gone, and so were Monsieur's pickings from natural history, his reputed roc's egg and his crocodile,—but there were Monsieur's cordon bleu, which Jacqueline had taken from his breast after he was dead, and Madame's fan and snuff-box. And beside these lay an old peasant woman's chaplet, and under a cover a frayed yellow letter, which began, "Mamma, your son is one of the Commissaries of Paris."

In like manner, over the new servants was old Paul, peppery as well as vinegarish, but perhaps good for tempering the oil and green leaves of the household salad. He was great on precedents, as the late Baron's major-domo and valet, but a little inclined, in the fashion of crazed Dominique and Babette, to address Madame as Mademoiselle. He never forgot, however, to greet Michel Sart, not with hereditary admiration and reverence, as Monsieur the Baron, but somewhat after this fashion:—"Our master, my domestics, our benefactor and master."

To be seen frequently among the maidservants and the children of the house was the tall, stately, broad-faced, rich-coloured aubergiste of Faye, the most capable, prosperous aubergiste within a score of leagues. To her our master always nodded, and smiled his grave, kind smile. When he was absent, Madame, slight and spirituelle as ever, leant graciously on the aubergiste's

shoulder, walking and talking, for she had recovered her full gift of speech.

Babette used to enforce earnest lessons on the boys. She would say, "My pets, love your father. I do not say love your mother, for everybody loves the beautiful, graceful, happy dame whom your father adored always. But every one does not know that the quiet man at her back is the best man in France. She knows it now; I have ever known it; and the people of Faye have a suspicion of it at last, though they still think Monsieur Sart is plain, not a fine accomplished man by nature, like poor young Jonquille. Love your father, little ones; you can never love him enough. You will love your mother also; you are as fond of her, with her noble, tender heart, and her pretty ways, as the flowers are of the dew; but love your father not the less, though he is too busy a man to notice you much. Now go, my marmots. I run down to the auberge to entertain my customers, and to receive my little friend, Citizen Pepin. He brings the liquorice for the winter colds, and he gets the wine he loves."

But Babette had never any other words to say to her innocent, faithful admirer than—"You know my terms, Citizen Pepin; if you want a mistress to whom to tell your private thoughts, and keep you straight, and sew on a button when she is not too seriously occupied, or put a flower in your button-hole, or accept one from you to stick in her corsage, to go to mass with you on holidays, and walk along and look after you when you are sick,—for me, I do not object to that. But if you

will have a friend to marry you before a priest, and go and live with you altogether, for the purpose of cuffing each other, then I will have nothing to say to it." Pepin had long ago struck hands on the bargain, which any impartial person may see was not without its substantial advantages to him. In return for his devoted attendance, Mademoiselle Babette protected him, petted him in a sharp, imperious, sometimes scornful way, and loved him with a curious kind of remorseful, satirical, yet grateful love.

First in England, then in France at the Bourbon Court after the Restoration, and finally at the Orleans Court—which dynasty they acknowledged as flowers in their season,—the Chevalier and Madame de Faye, late Madame de Croï, were leaders of the world. They were worldly, roué, artificial, heartless, far apart in everything, except when it suited them to have a common roof and a common name; and were slightly united, even in their child. They furnished an excellent specimen of the traditional French couple and French home.

In another coterie in France Félicité Pommeran basked in her officer's renown. She lived to see the slouched shoulders surmounted by gold epaulettes, and the faultless Greek face set off by a general's helmet and plume. Even Madame Durand's ambition for her beautiful daughter was satisfied, and Citizen Hercules declaimed more loudly in praise of Buonaparte than he had ever done in honour of the Convention. Poor young Olympe had leaped at a right conclusion. It was fortunate for Félicité that after the first fervour of his

romantic passion and its spice of intrigue, her soldier was rapidly transformed into the severe and haughty head of a family. At the expense of his exclusive authority and rights Félicité dared not please the world, unless by being the most popular and beloved of the dames of society, a distinction with which Bertrand found no fault, as serving, by the way, his interests. Her finesse, her manœuvring, her beatings of the heart, were in the end confined to comparatively harmless wheedling of her husband for the occasional smiles and caresses which Jonquille, the peasant-born deputy, would have lavished upon her.

But Félicité did not regret the past, nor was she remorseful over it, nor did she even avoid it in her reflections. Such conduct would have argued feelings on her part alien to her nature. On the contrary, she delighted to recount, with blue eyes swimming in tears, all her experiences of the Revolution. She would tell how the soi-disant Demoiselle de Faye took refuge in her father's entresol; how charming and distinguished she was; how she went mad, and was lost, about the time of the affair of Charlotte Corday, but was long afterwards rescued, she knew not how. Above all, how she herself had been affianced for a time to a young deputy and commissary of the Convention, who came constantly to the house in the Rue St. Honoré, and was brave and handsome; and how the General, under a temporary cloud, and disconcerted by her parents, lived under their roof, paying his addresses to her;

and how jealous her two fine lovers had been of each other.

Then she would come to the fall of the Girondists, and the poor young commissary, and the loss of her angel sister, who had wandered abroad, and been arrested along with Jonquille Sart, and been guillotined with him,—she getting a glimpse of them in the cart, and fainting away. She nearly fainted away at the recital, yet she always persisted in giving it.

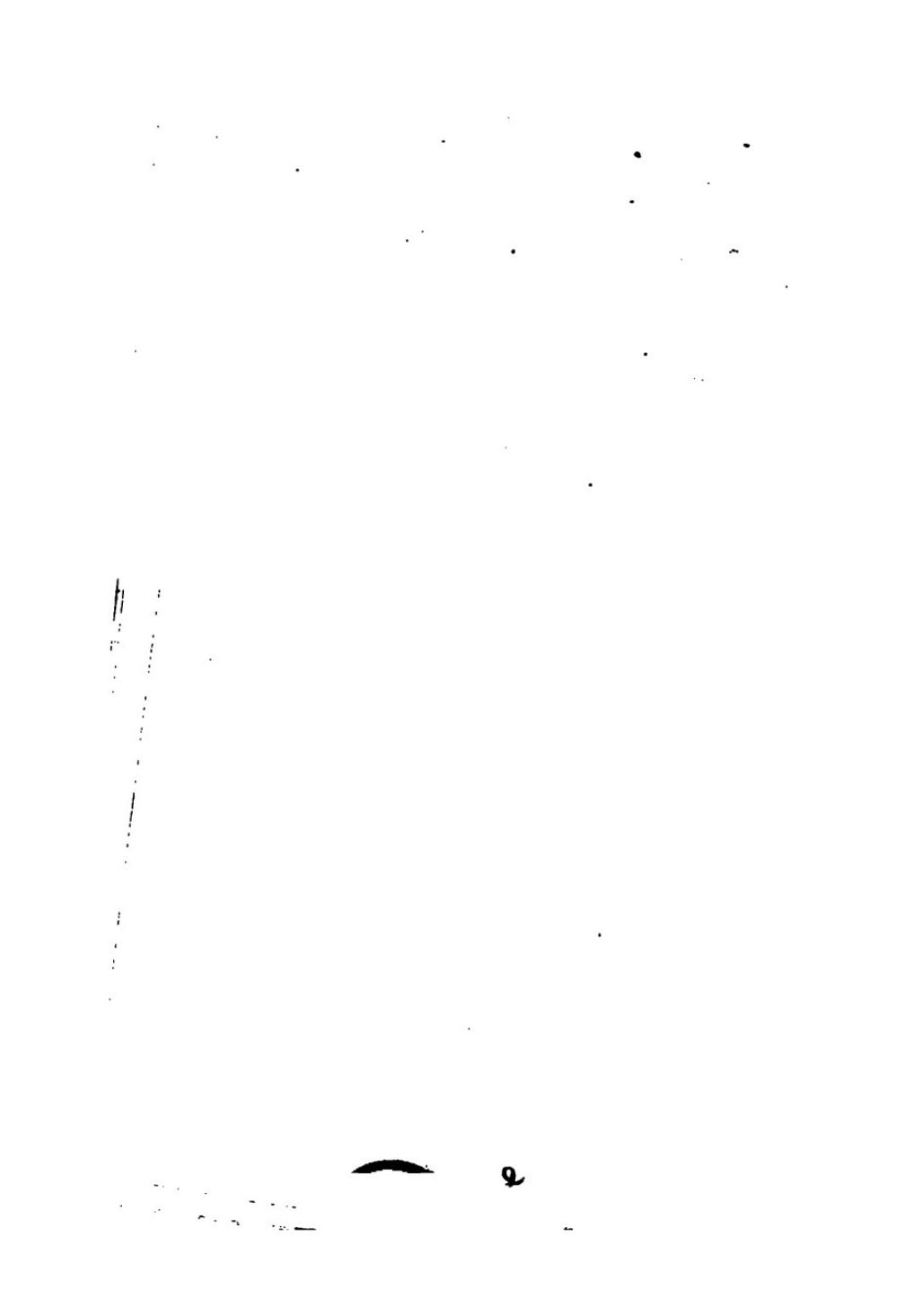
When ten years more had fled, and the little corporal, the First Consul, the Emperor, all his campaigns ended, with his chin sunk on his breast, and his arms folded, was eating his heart out on the island-rock in the wide western sea, and one of the most handsome and gallant of his generals had fallen in his last great battle, Félicité added her beloved husband to the select sentimental group of her slain friends.

A score more years, and Félicité was the loveliest of old women, with admirers and servants, whose respective claims she had to adjust to the end of her days. Children, and children's children, courted her like lovers,—the dear, beautiful old mamma, to whom they accorded more spontaneous homage than they accorded to younger women. She would still descant without the slightest difficulty, to those charmed audiences, on the rival merits of Bertrand Pommeran and Jonquille Sart, describing them in animated detail. She would exclaim, with a little apology to the rising generation, that there were no such men now as the Deputy of the Girondist Convention and the officer of Napoleon. But the men

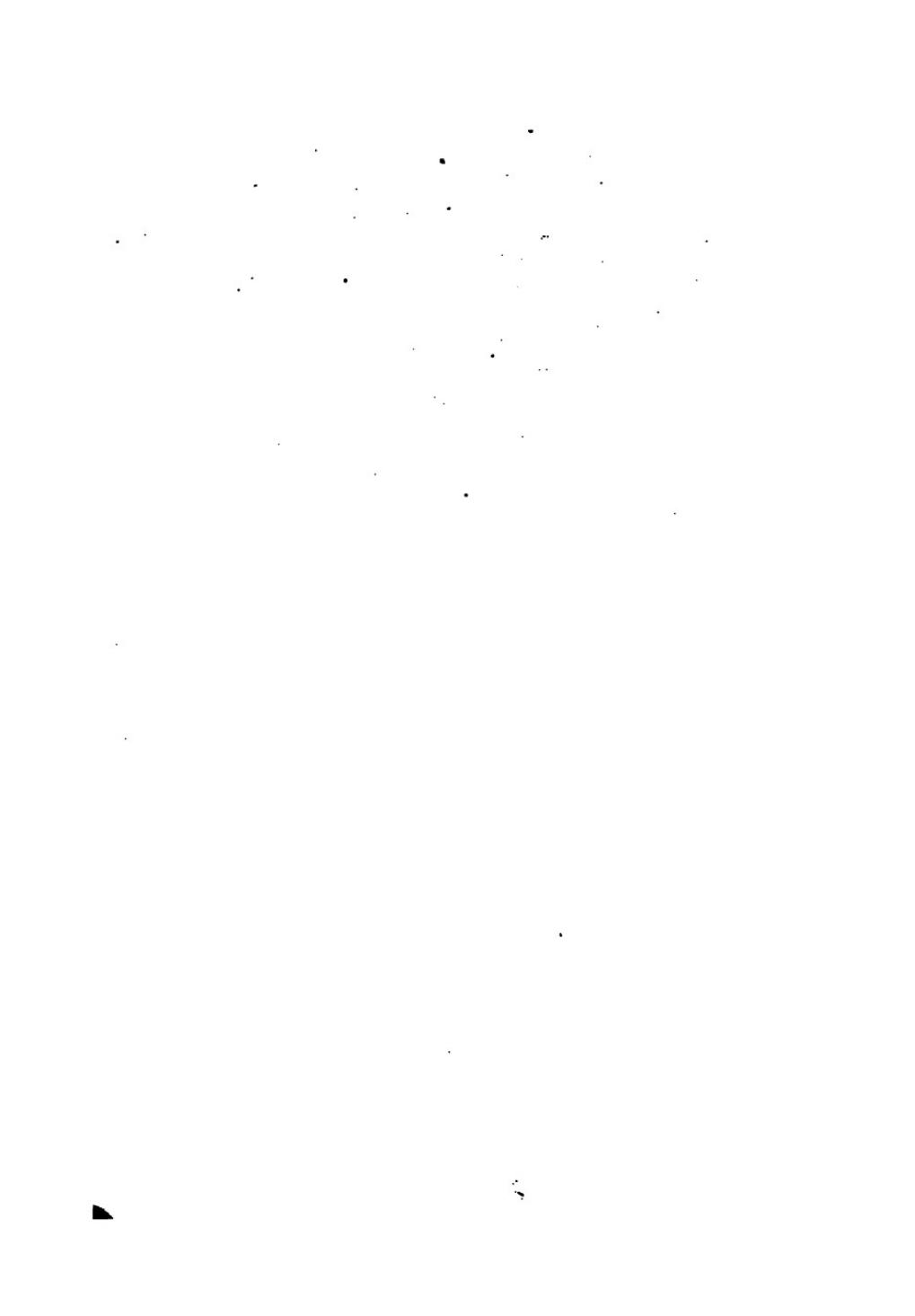
could not help it, poor mortals, they had not the same theatre to figure on, and—ah! well, perhaps there were not now such women either, as figured in the Revolution.

Michel Sart and Jacqueline spoke softly of their mother, their brother ; walked more hand in hand, clave more entirely to each other, and stood more firmly together, even in the centre of their children and their friends, because of the old trials.

THE END











Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 019 495 915

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

APR 09 2002 -14
APR 30 2002

